THEATRE AND PSYCHE

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROGRAMME OF PREPARATION FOR BECOMING AN ANALYST

THE INDEPENDENT GROUP OF ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

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NOVEMBER 2003

PREFACE

Five years ago I had a dream in which I was looking around a big old library that belonged to my analyst and her husband. I was approached by a young dark woman, my analyst's assistant, who told me that my analyst had done some important work on fairy tales and that this was some kind of break-through. Apparently, what she had done was treat the fairy story as a play. I suppose this thesis is a kind of belated response to this dream. It is also, as I have realised, during the writing of it, a kind of assimilation of all the apparently disconnected interests and fascinations I followed before I discovered analytical psychology. It would seem that they were not the blind alleys and dead ends they sometimes appeared at the time.

INTRODUCTION

My thesis is that theatre is a primary metaphor for Jungian theoria in that it enables us to bypass some of the problems which other approaches, which are mired in a post-Cartesian viewpoint, cannot see through. If we regard Jungian psychology as essentially an elaboration of Freudian psychology, which inevitably takes on certain 19th century scientistic, positivistic assumptions, (e.g. the separation of subject and object, and of cause and effect, together with an essentially developmental approach to the psyche) then it will seem natural, as it has to many, to attempt to graft a whole gamut of post-Freudian concepts onto Jungian thought. The idea here appears to be that we should avoid getting stuck in a purist Jungian ghetto, and should keep up with developments in parallel, psychoanalytic schools. (Hence the attraction of many 'Jungians' to, for example, object-relations theories.)

There is no question that Freud was a great psychological pioneer, and a great myth-maker, but it was the *split* from Freud, and the creative illness that followed it which marked the birth of Jung's mature psychology. This was forged from the great rush of material that came out of Jung's night sea journey following the traumatic events of 1911-13. Far from growing out of the Freudian tradition, it marks a radical break with it. Jung's emphasis on the primacy of image provides the bedrock for a psychology which, freed from the positivistic theoretical assumptions behind Freud's work, and that of his followers, enables an approach to psyche which acknowledges the importance of full reflexivity, thus allowing us to see, for example that the idea of scientific observation which underlies the modern worldview is a mirage: we cannot perceive without being

perceived: the psychic image requires participation, outside of objectivity and subjectivity. This is an approach that sustains paradox and does not avoid it.

Instead of relying on the dominant logos of the scientific perspective, which cannot do justice to psyche, I maintain that only a logos which remains true to paradox and the reflexive quality of experience will enable a truly psychological approach. I call this a *Dionysian* logos.

Before we can see what is occurring in the actual analytical encounter, it is perhaps necessary to understand what psychology actually *is*. What we are engaged in when we work with soul? It is in attempting to answer this fundamental question that we can learn a great deal from theatre and the Dionysian logos that imbues it. We shall see how the world of theatre is a world of paradox – an upside down realm where oppositions such as subject/object, self/other, cause/effect no longer hold. This liminal world is equivalent to the imaginal realm, the world of soul: a locus neither literal nor spiritual but somehow mediating between the two. The vision of theatre is speculative, though the reflection it allows stems not from a literal representation of positive fact, an external reflection, but from an internal reflection by which the positive is dissolved into a negative Dionysian dismemberment. As we shall see, in theatre the actor as positive person is subsumed and lost in the role, becoming neither real nor unreal, but something else, playing between the two.

There are similarities between this event and the ritual event, whereby the participant is absorbed into the role or spirit that he represents. Crucially, theatre goes beyond this by virtue of the presence of the audience, which both witnesses and takes part in what occurs. This distance between audience and performance makes room for detachment and reflection. Without it there is simply a tuning into the archetypal realm which in itself is not actually psychological. Historically theatre occurs when consciousness becomes self-aware. Mythological and ritual consciousness entails a thorough

participation in a world where there is no split between man and the gods, or matter and spirit. With the awareness of this split comes a different kind of consciousness, requiring a new reflective mediation.

We can see this shift of approach also in alchemy. Here for the first time there is an emphasis on the intervention of the human adept, a reflecting subject who observes. The alchemical opus entails a consciousness of the subjective activity of the human mind and the participation of this mind in what occurs in the vessel. The artifex is simultaneously observing the transformations which occur, and participating in them. Alchemy is then the unity of subjective activity and objective product. So it is with the theatrical model, in which the transformations that occur on stage are witnessed and also entered into by the audience members, who retain an awareness of themselves as subjective agents. The audience cannot just sit back in a distanced way (as it would in the cinema) and observe the drama. Whether it wants to or not, it is pulled into the vessel, as it were, and its very presence affects what occurs. Moreover in the greatest theatre, as we shall see in the case of Shakespeare, the very ambiguity of the event, its radically fictional aspect, serves to unsettle the unthinking positivistic assumptions of the audience, so that the world henceforth assumes a new aspect.

This thesis is about theatre as a way of seeing. That is what 'theatre' means. It derives from the Greek word qéâtron (theatron)- which means a place for seeing. It is closely related to the word *theoria*. For Jung *theoria* was very different from 'theory'. Theoria, Jung tells us, means "looking about the world,' 'contemplation'; hence 'speculation." (Jung, 1951a, §245n) Elsewhere he points out that 'every psychic process, so far as it can be observed as such, is essentially theoria, that is to say it is a presentation'. (Jung, 1946, §162) Theoria differs from the modern idea of the theoretical in that it is participatory, and consists in being involved in what one sees. As Jung emphasises, 'Never forget that in psychology the *means* by which you judge and observe the psyche is the *psyche* itself…

The psyche is not only the *object* but also the *subject* of our science.' (Jung, 1935, §277) Moreover, if we wish to learn about psyche, and like Jung believe both that, 'the psyche is always speaking about itself' (Jung, 1954, §483) and, 'image is psyche' (Jung, 1929, §75) then it is crucial that we have a way of seeing image. The metaphor of theatre provides this and it does so because it is essentially dialectical, thus allowing room for the many faceted reflexivities that we come up against when we start to involve ourselves in image and how to look at it.

A few words on what this thesis is not about. First, I am not concerned with either dramatherapy or psychodrama. Second, I do not specifically intend to discuss *drama* (i.e. the text presented in a theatre) except in a few cases where it bears on what I say about theatre. For me theatre is an event, not a text. It is a dynamic unity that includes actor, audience, play, place and time. I intend to examine slowly and carefully what occurs in this unity because it is far from apparent to the casual onlooker. Familiarity with a form that has existed as far back as we can see, and which is common to every human community, has meant that what really occurs in theatre has been taken for granted.

As a metaphor, theatre has moved beyond cliché; we all talk of playing parts or rôles, making entrances, taking bows, without any thought of the original context. This indicates the primal nature of the metaphor in question. Indeed, it is probably impossible to disentangle the influence of theatre on life from the influence of life on theatre. For this reason it is crucial for me to stick to the image of theatre as theatre and not be waylaid by theatrical elements in everyday life. Theatre is not life; it is a way of seeing life. The artifice of theatre paradoxically allows us to see beyond artifice into truth.

A Short Note on the 'Dionysian' in Jungian Psychology

Jung's psychology is concerned with acknowledging the unconscious – the 'other', and theatre, in whole and in part, form and content, is all about confronting the 'other' and being confronted by it. For the Greeks, theatre was presided over by the god Dionysus and indeed all drama occurred in a place and at a time sacred to him. Given the fact that very few tragedies or comedies were directly concerned with Dionysus it is far from obvious what the nature of the link was between that particular god and theatre. The Greeks themselves, we are told, often complained that the plays had 'nothing to do with Dionysus'. It is my contention that theatre is a uniquely Dionysian way of seeing; the logos of theatre is the logos of Dionysus and that this is what makes theatre particularly appropriate as a way of approaching the 'other' through image. It partakes uniquely of the Dionysian tension between illusion and reality, wild nature and culture, individuation and fusion.

James Hillman has drawn a distinction between two conceptions of Dionysus in Jung's writing. (Hillman, 1972, pp.151-64) The first derives from Jung's reading of Nietzsche and has more to do with Wotan than the classical Dionysus. This 'stresses the ecstatic, excessive, barbarian, titanic, even criminal aspects'. The second is more in line with the work of classicists and mythologists such as Kerényi, for whom Dionysus was the image of indestructible life (Kerényi, 1996), Rohde, who emphasised the connection with Hades, the mysteries and the cult of souls (Rohde, 1987) Otto who highlights Dionysus' madness which he sees as expressing the inner antithesis of life and death (Otto, 1965) and Dodds who stressed the freedom and joy of the Dionysian experience in the forgetting of self, station and differences. (Dodds, 1963) The crucial difference between the two conceptions is that the first is seen from outside, from an Apollonic ego perspective, and the second from within his own cosmos.

This second Dionysus, as Jung reminds us (Jung, 1955-6, §259n.), was called the divided one and this draws our attention to the fact that the central Dionysian experience is that of dismemberment. Seen from within the Dionysian world, 'the dismemberment of central control is at the same time the resurrection of the natural light of archetypal consciousness' (Hillman, 1972, p161). It is important to emphasise that my use of the term Dionysian stems from this second Dionysus. My major source is Euripides' *The Bacchae*.

Nietzsche's fantasy of the primal opposition of Apollo and Dionysus, and the birth of tragedy from this tension has been hugely influential, but it has little to do with the Greek god who, alone, ruled over tragedy and comedy. As an archetypal dominant Dionysus does not need to be opposed to any other. The realm of Dionysus is sufficient unto itself, containing its own oppositions, without recourse to any other god. In brief this Dionysus is primarily paradoxical: somehow maintaining opposites that elsewhere could not be held together: life/death; god/man; male/female; reality/illusion; human/animal; manifest/hidden; present/eternal. It is this paradoxical feature of the god that makes that supremely paradoxical form, theatre, Dionysian. How this is revealed, and what it has to do with psyche is the subject of this paper.

THE ESSENCE OF THEATRE

Before going on it is important to examine our subject – theatre – and to attempt to identify its essential qualities. Firstly, it requires a demarcated place in which the theatrical event takes place. This does not need to be a particular building denoted 'theatre' or indeed a permanent environment of any kind. Theatre can take place in the street, for example, but even here an area needs to be marked out as the place of performance. The first act of a street performer is often to set out his props in such a way that those who walk past become aware that a performance is imminent or has begun. This is crucial because the audience, another essential element, needs to know that what it is witnessing is theatre. If two persons pretend to fight in the street and those who stop to watch do not know that what they are witnessing is fictional then there is no theatre. This will be obvious because the bystanders will rapidly become involved, egging the participants on, or trying to stop them, and their relation to what is occurring will be crucially different from that of a true audience.

The creation of a space for playing, wherever it is, serves to create an important distance between actors and onlookers and it also focuses attention on the event, giving a special value, as it were, to everything in that space. The place marked out assumes different qualities from a place that has not been marked out. Once it has been done everything that occurs, or even exists, in that place assumes special significance. An audience files into a theatre to find a chair in the middle of the stage. For them it is no longer a chair, it has become a 'chair'. In this way theatre reflects what a psychology that is archetypal does; the chair becomes an archetypal 'chair' because it has been given value[i]. This is not inherent in the thing itself but in the perspective that theatre has given

it. (C.f. Jung's comment, 'Whether a thing is a symbol or not depends chiefly upon the attitude of the observing consciousness.' (Jung, 1921, §818))

Moreover, this especially significant place, and the special focus that it encourages, allows an extraordinary fluidity. For once the audience recognises the space as theatrical, then the performers can, with a prop or a mere word, make the place wherever they wish. Shakespeare is very adept at subtly signposting with a few words the location of a scene. Within a single act of a play, the audience may be whisked from one country to another, from a warm room to a wind-blown heath.

This introduces another important aspect of theatre: time. Just as a kind of bracketing of place is required for theatre so too time must be bracketed. There must be a beginning and an end. But just as we saw with place, this focussing serves to create a magical fluidity. Not only can we cross continents in a few words, but we can leap forward twenty years! Or, as in Japanese Noh theatre, time may become extraordinarily slow and concentrated through the absolute economy and discipline of the actor, who although he can take five minutes to reach the centre of the stage, nonetheless can travel from one province to another in a single step. What is remarkable is that an audience is not at all disturbed by this elasticity of time and place. Within the fictional envelope almost anything can occur and be accepted, not as reality, but as 'reality'.

This is the fluidity of the Dionysian. Dionysus is manifested in all kinds of moisture: sap, water, milk, wine, blood. In the theatrical context this becomes fluidity of place, time and identity. One place can flow into another, one time into another time, one person into another person. Psychologically this is to do with the dissolution of the positivities of ego perspective, the apparently rigid discrete entities which in our everyday consciousness we perceive as *this* person, *this* place, or *this* time. Evidently, this has much in common with the dream-world, where similar fluidities exist. The transformation which occurs in the theatrical vessel may also be paralleled by that of the alchemical

vessel, where every coagulation requires a dissolution. This parallel reminds us that just as in alchemy the substance remains somehow the same, despite all the operations upon it, so it is that theatrical transformations are not post-modern infinite substitutions, whereby anything can be anything else, but revelations of deeper truths, paradoxically performed through fictional means.

Even at this early point, it is worth pointing out some parallels between theatre and analysis. First, both share the ritualistic rigidity of time and place; analysis too must take place in a strictly demarcated area and for a precisely limited time. Yet, as in theatre this contrasts with enormous fluidity in respect to what occurs or seems to occur there. The analysand may have been turning up to the same little room every Tuesday at 9.30 for years, but while he is there anything can happen. He can be transported into childhood, he can rehearse the rage and fear he never really felt, he can dissolve the rigidities of his identity into whole cast of characters and conduct animated conversations with them, he can cast the analyst, who is already playing an important role in the drama being enacted, as bullying father, cold mother, all-wise magician… In short, as in the world of theatre, anything is possible.

The next essential ingredient of theatre is the performer. Let us say that we go to see a production of Shakespeare's *Richard III*. Someone walks out into our empty bracketed space. Who is he? Clearly just a man, like you or me. And yet, simultaneously he is someone else. He begins to speak. He tells us that he is Richard, Duke of Gloucester and reveals something of his situation. We know that he is *not* a duke at all; he is an actor. Had the same man walked up to us on our way to the theatre and told us that he was Richard, Duke of Gloucester we would have dismissed his claim as either a lie or a symptom of madness. Yet, because we are in the theatre something strange occurs. We simultaneously know that he is an actor on the stage and believe that he is Richard, Duke of Gloucester. In Coleridge's words, we 'suspend our disbelief'.

It is not that, for the duration of the play, we think we are witnessing events from the fifteenth century, only to reawaken to the twenty first century as the curtain closes. We are never in any doubt as to the place or time or the identity of the men and women we see on the stage. As we entered the theatre, we saw posters that emphasised the names of the actors whose performances we were about to witness, and if we buy a programme we can, at any moment during the performance, peruse the career details of these actors. And yet, there is a sense in which we are caught up by and involved in the drama that unfolds, and for that we need to believe that we are watching the story of Richard the Third as it happens now, before our eyes.

There are then two ways of seeing: one the positive, concrete, everyday mode by means of which we sit in a room and witness some actors dressing up, moving around the stage and declaiming, (or as Ralph Richardson once defined acting: 'Shouting in the evening') and the other which is the way of imagination, the Dionysian way, in which we both inhabit and are inhabited by the images we witness. If we employ the former approach, we remain in duality: I, the subject, look at you, the object, separated and ultimately untouched. Nothing can occur because I remain in the fastness of my subjective ego consciousness, and from there the world is unanimated and flat. But if we are taken by the Dionysian perspective we open ourselves to a paradoxical universe in which subject and object lose their solidity and we experience a fluidity of place, time and identity that can be transforming. Of course, the theatre is not the only place where this may occur; Dionysus' net is much wider than that. However, an examination of theatre allows us to see clearly what the elements of the Dionysian perspective are, and how they interlock.

It will have been obvious that it is impossible to discuss the performer and what he does without introducing the audience. In a sense, the two are yoked together. Both are required for theatre to exist. Those who have only experienced theatre from the stalls

are not always aware of this fact. This is partly due to the prevalence of a type of naturalistic theatre in which the audience members feel like eavesdroppers on a private event. Nonetheless, even in this type of theatre, unbeknownst to itself, the audience is a crucial participant. Just as the audience is reacting to all that it witnesses, with laughter, gasps or simply a pregnant silence, so the performers are constantly aware of and reacting to the contribution of the audience. This enormously important relationship will be examined later, but it is important at this stage to clarify that the audience is *not* a passive consumer of the events on stage but a true participant.

THEATRE AND RITUAL

Theatre as an identifiable entity seems to develop in history just when society begins to leave behind a culture characterised by myth and ritual and starts to inhabit a world which is culturally recognisable as 'modern'. Nonetheless, on the face of it theatre seems to have quite a lot in common with ritual. Many, though not all, rituals are, like theatre, 'performed' as enactments before the eyes of the community. These performances occur in special segregated locations, and this bracketing serves to emphasise the difference between these actions and those of normal, everyday life. Ritual and theatre both have rites of entry and exit (in the theatre these include disrobing of audience, ticket taking, lowering of lights etc.) which put the audience in a state of mind in which what it witnesses will not be confused with real life. These events differ categorically from normal positive occurrences. What occurs is not less real than ordinary life, but differently real. As in a ritual, the participants need to gather before the event may take place. The audience, or the community, is essential to the playing out of the ritual or piece of theatre. Witnessing is somehow necessary. Moreover, there is an important gap between the here and-now witnessing and the then-and-there events that are enacted. As Eliade puts it,

> the repetition of a ritual founded by Divine Beings implies the reactualisation of the original Time when the rite was first performed... The rite makes the myth present. Everything that the myth tells us of the Time of beginning…the rite reactualises and shows it as happening, here and now. (Eliade, 1994, p.6)

Theatre too presents for us now something that happened then, *in illo tempore*, and yet is somehow still happening. Both theatre and ritual are, then, acts of *memoria*, just as much as dreams that play on past events or accounts of childhood trauma. These too are myths of origin, powerful fictions that are still happening. As Sallustius says: 'These things never happened, but always are.'

As we have seen, theatre requires a demarcated space, which gives special significance to what it contains, and this allows great fluidity of space, time and identity. Noting the parallels with the ritual temenos, anthropologist Victor Turner who has devoted much of his work to the interplay and overlap of ritual and theatre, has written extensively on what he, after van Gennep, calls the *liminal* space. (van Gennep, 1908; Turner, 1981) The liminal is marked by a separation from and overturning of every aspect of normal society. Seen from the viewpoint of normality the initiands who inhabit the liminal are dark or invisible, without names of clothing, barely distinguishable from animals. They are considered to be dead or dying. However a certain power comes with this status: economic or legal ties are loosened or broken and Initiands are considered sacred, therefore untouchable and dangerous like gods.

Although serious work and study is expected of those undergoing the initiation it characteristically takes a ludic and aesthetic form: they are taught song, dancing, painting, clay moulding, wood carving, masking. Factors of culture are isolated then recombined in numerous, often grotesque, ways. Elements of the familiar are played with and thus become unfamiliar. There are sacred games, riddles, mock ordeals, fooling and clowning. As Turner says,

> …the bizarre becomes the normal and…through the loosening of connections between elements customarily bound together in certain combination, their scrambling and

> recombining in monstrous, fantastic and unnatural shapes the novices are induced to think and think hard about cultural experiences they had hitherto taken for granted. The novices are taught that they did not know what they thought they knew. (Turner, 1981, p.28)

Actors in rehearsal go through a comparable, though less drastic, experience. There is often a feeling of lost identity as the actor makes his way, as it were, from his own ego towards the other yet with no certain knowledge of what he seeks. The serious work of getting the performance together always contains ludic elements such as games, and before a performance can be discovered, the old, stuck performances must be deconstructed. One way to play with the text in rehearsal is to take things too far – seeking out the limits and smashing them, before they can be re-found again.

The remarkable bonding together that occurs within a rehearsing cast can be compared with what Turner calls 'communitas' and which may be seen as a loss of positive personhood. He describes it as 'an unmediated relationship between historical, idiosyncratic, concrete individuals'. (Turner, 1981, p.45) There is an experience of unity, openness, lack of pretension, sympathy and direct relationship in the here and now. Crucially this is experienced as outside of the societal collective.

Also characteristic is what has been called 'Flow'. This 'denotes the holistic sensation present when we act with total involvement'. It is

> a state in which action follows action according to an internal logic which seems to need no conscious intervention on our part…we experience it as a unified flowing from one moment to the next, in which we feel in control of our actions, and in which there is little distinction between self and environment; between stimulus and response; or between past present and future. (Csikszentmihalyi and Macaloon, quoted in Turner, 1981, p.55)

Anyone who has acted in a theatrical performance will recognize this description of the experience. Among the qualities of 'flow' that Turner draws attention to are: an elimination of dualism, an abaissement de niveau mental, and loss of ego (though without loss of self-awareness).

Despite these striking parallels between ritual and theatre the fact remains that they are profoundly different, and the difference is important. It concerns the status of the witnessing, reflecting audience. One way to examine this difference is to compare three things: the act, the ritual act and the theatrical act. First, there is action in the profane world, for example, a woman offers some food to her family. The action is part of the continuum of everyday life. No-one reflects on what is occurring. It is what happens. Next, the same act occurs in a ritual setting. A priest offers some food to those who are sharing the ritual. Now the act has become symbolic. The offering, the food and the eating of it are all symbolic. The bracketing we have discussed which serves to mark the ritual event off from ordinary life means that our attention is drawn to the event in a way that cannot occur outside in the rush of everyday living. Yet, those who participate in ritual are still part of what occurs. It happens through them. Only experience is essential to ritual, not reflection. When Jung asked the Elgonyi why they performed the ritual of spitting into their hands and holding them up to the sun at dawn, they replied, 'That is how it has always been done.' (Jung, 1956, §498) The ritual act is then a symbolic act but it does not necessarily entail perception of itself as such.

It is the *theatrical* act which contains within itself the machinery both for action and reflection, simultaneously. So, to follow up our example, an actor playing Christ offers food to some actors playing disciples and this is witnessed by an audience. Both actors and audience are participants in what occurs, but there is a different quality to the

participation from that of the ritual event. The audience, and to some extent the actors, are coming to the event from outside; they are in it and out of it simultaneously. In a ritual action, however, the celebrants stand unquestionably *inside* the rite.

Another way of describing this difference would be to draw attention to the contrasting religious status of the ritual event as against the theatrical event. Indeed, this becomes clear if we look at an example which is transitional, in that it contains aspects of both ritual and theatre. In the popular religious theatre of the Medieval period, the mystery cycles, the assembled audience, far from being a detached and passive observer, was addressed by the actors as perhaps the most important figure in the drama which unfolded, that of Mankind. When Christ appealed directly from the cross to the people standing about the pageant he spoke simultaneously to those spectators at Golgotha who were directly responsible for his death, and to the fourteenth century Christians who made up the audience.

Medieval religious drama also resembled ritual in that it confused the time and place of the enacted events with the present. As Anne Barton puts it: 'While the performance lasted, audience and actors shared the same ritual world, a world more real than the one which existed outside its frame.' (Barton, 1961, p.20) We should note that this half-ritual, half-theatre took place in a society that resembled the pre-modern in that, like tribal society, every aspect of life was 'religious'. Non-ritual theatre seems to develop when this consensus breaks up, and the intrusion of the secular splits the world into the two spheres, 'sacred' and 'profane'. It thus loses the overtly religious and the wholly participatory aspects of ritual, while maintaining the sense that it is outside of, or even opposite to, everyday life, and that anything can occur there. Most important, it develops the role of the separate, witnessing audience, which is somehow both in the vessel and out of it.

There is a parallel here to alchemy, which also marks a shift from an attitude of consciousness whereby myth and ritual are experienced 'as though they had come into existence without man's intervention, in such a way that the collaboration of the psyche – an indispensable factor – remains invisible' (Jung, 1956, §498), towards the idea of an 'opus' in which the 'human intervention is explicit in the figure of the adept and his operations and is a focus of attention in addition to the other focus, the phenomena or images in the retort.' (Giegerich, 1998, p.136) Giegerich's description of alchemy as a place where there are two elements: the transformations of mythology represented 'objectively' as events *and* a reflecting subject observing them, would serve as a pretty good definition of theatre.

The world of alchemy differs from the world of ritual in just the ways that we have seen that theatre and ritual differ: in ritual the imaginal character of the action subsumes the individual participant so that his personality disappears behind the ritual mask. Moreover, in that all rituals are simply repetitions of primordial actions, the human actions which make them up are merely absorbed into a god-given form. Alchemy and theatre require much more inventiveness and improvisation on the part of the individual adept or actor.

Moreover, as we have seen, the actor and the audience enjoy a relationship of profound reflexivity. This too is echoed in the response of the alchemist to the processes he witnesses in the retort. Jung emphasises that the adept is involved in a dialogue with the lapis, and he describes this as 'a living dialectical relationship to certain dominants of the unconscious.' (Jung, 1944, §391) I shall expand on this correspondence in my discussion of Jung's writings on active imagination. My aim here is not to *equate* theatre and alchemy, but, by examining the parallels, to gain a fresh perspective on what, by its nature, must remain a complex and difficult subject.

ACTOR and AUDIENCE

In the earliest theatre of our tradition, Greek tragedy, the actors wore masks[ii]. These masks no doubt served several purposes, they allowed doubling (so one actor could easily play several roles), male actors could play female parts, the simple and larger than life picture of a face could be recognised from the back of a large open-air theatre, and the actor's voice could be amplified by the voice-box in the mask. However, none of these admittedly useful aspects of the mask are sufficient to fully explain its use. For the Greeks the mask looked backwards to ritual use. In many tribal societies, the mask relates to the dead ancestors, now present and alive in the form of the mask. Always, as Kerényi points out, the use of the mask reminds us of

> the meeting of man himself with the non-individual… human face. It is an overwhelming encounter, whether it takes place in the secret cult or in the theatre. [The mask] is a true magic implement, which enables man at any moment to… find the road into a broader, more spiritual world, without departing from the world of natural existence. (Kerényi, 1960, p.167)

In Greek religion, the mask was particularly associated with Dionysus. This Dionysian mask conveys with great force the immediate presence of the god. Paradoxically he is entirely here in the mask, though simultaneously absent. Otto says: 'It is the symbol and the manifestation of that which is simultaneously there and not there: that which is excruciatingly near, that which is completely absent – both in one reality.' (Otto, 1965, p.91)

The crucial aspect of the mask is that it is all surface: it has no reverse side. In the theatrical arena, this is its most important value. In the Greek language the word for mask is próswpon (prosopon)- which contains the meanings, face, aspect, person and stage figure. As John Jones says, 'The face is the total aspect; it presents the human individual, the person. Therefore to say that the mask is a kind of face is to take it very seriously indeed.' (Jones, 1962, p.44) For the Greeks then, the mask was a presentation of the person, as rendered by theatre. It served to take the audience's attention away from the human being who happened to be behind the mask. 'At the living heart of the tradition the actor is the mask and the mask is an artifact-face with nothing to offer but itself.' (Jones, 1962, p.45) We can now understand what Aristotle means when he says that, 'Tragedy is an imitation not of human beings but of action and life' (Poetics, 50a 16-22). He is emphasising that what is presented in theatre is the presentation of a whole image, in which the masked actor is only a part, albeit an important one.

In the centuries which have passed since Aristotle the use of the mask has almost ceased and we are now used to seeing the actual face of the actor. The hyper-realist technique of modern 'method' actors, seems to have encouraged a concern with the psychological workings behind the face, so that drama seems to have become increasingly concerned with human beings rather than 'action and life'. Theatrically speaking, however, this can only ever be an illusion. The modern actor is and has always been a mask, a surface which shows the audience only one facet of the whole image that makes up the play. The theatrical presentation of which the actor is a part is an image, and what is of interest, psychologically, is the relation of this image to the witnessing audience.

There is a strong parallel here between theatre and dream. Jung, as is well known, compared the structure of the dream to that of a Greek tragedy, laying out four stages: Statement of Place, Dramatis Personae, Exposition; Development of Plot; Culmination

or Crisis; Solution or Lysis. (Jung, 1954, §561 ff.) Others have pointed out that dreams rarely show this ideal structure. (Hillman, 1983, p.37) It seems to me that Jung was right to compare the dream to drama, though perhaps not in the way he did so.

Like tragedy, the dream is an image, not of human beings but of action and life (the action and life of the psyche). The 'persons' of the dream are not human beings, however much they may resemble them and our interpretation of a dream will go wrong if we identify the father in the dream with the real, human, father. Just as there is a temptation, when looking at a dream, to identify with the image of the dreamer, the dream-ego, so in theatre we can easily find ourselves rooting for the hero. Yet, even in tragedy this is a mistake, according to Aristotle, for what we are watching is an imitation of an *action,* not the adventure of a hero.

Unlike other, more purely literary, forms of narrative, the drama is radically decentred. In epic we follow the heroic progress of a single figure. In the novel, the writer's voice unifies the perspective. But theatre presents a number of independent figures, each telling its own story. As Robert Dupree puts it, 'Each character is a symbol, bearing its own 'atmosphere' independently of the others. The characters exist in relation to each other only through the spectator, without whom the drama cannot exist.' (Dupree, 1980, p.219) Patricia Berry has warned against allowing the interpretation of the dream, seen as narrative, to become the ego's trip, (Berry, 1982, pp.67ff) and it seems to me that to view the dream as a drama rather than a story can help to counter this. Von Franz says,

> One can understand every dream as a drama in which we ourselves are *everything*, that is the author, director, actors, and prompter, as well as the spectators. If one tries to understand the dream in this way, the result is a startling realisation for the dreamer of what is happening in him psychically, 'behind his back,' so to speak. The surprise may be experienced as painful, as

> joyful, or as enlightening, depending on how he accepts the dream-play in consciousness. (Von Franz, 1998, pp. 3-4)

The parallel with theatre is apt because the spectator in the theatre, when fully involved in the play, is indeed *everything*. He participates emotionally in the play as a whole, while throughout retaining the detachment of a spectator. It is then possible to experience the kind of response which von Franz describes with regard to the dream: 'The understanding of such dreams leads *eo ipso* to a change in one's conscious views of things experienced outwardly, as well as – and this is what concerns us – a change in our view of ourselves.' (Von Franz, 1998, p.4)

This is a change which only occurs when our ingrained habit of dividing our ego as subject from everything else as object is radically challenged and we attain the insight that to see something truly is also, in some sense, to be seen by it: 'One sees oneself for a moment through the eyes of another, of something objective which views one from the outside, as it were.' (Von Franz, 1998, p.7) This experience can be felt as deeply threatening.

A 52 year old talented artist I saw as a hospital patient experienced himself as profoundly cut off from the world yet remained resolutely inflated in his image of himself as someone who saw the world clearly in a way that others couldn't. He had a recurring vision of a huge eye staring down on him. He found this image terrifying, and had great difficulty in drawing it. Not surprisingly, he also found analysis unbearable and stopped coming after a few weeks. Though literally crippled by his neurosis, his ego could not take the risk of allowing the mutual interpenetration of transference in depth, an experience that might have opened him up to an interpenetration with the world, thus dissolving his profound alienation.

To stick to the image of the dream means, then, to see the dream as a whole, as a representation of psychological action. After all, as Jung says,

> The self only exists inasmuch as you appear. Not that you are, but that you do is the self. The self appears in your deeds and deeds always mean relationship; a deed is something that you produce which is practically outside of you, between yourself and your surroundings, between subject and object – there the self is visible. (Jung, 1934-9, p.795)

Jung emphasises that, 'In myths and fairytales, as in dreams, the soul speaks about itself, and the archetypes reveal themselves in their natural interplay, as 'formation, transformation / eternal Mind's eternal recreation.' (Jung, 1945, §400 Trans. Giegerich in Giegerich, 1998) Later he adds, '…we are not saying anything *about* the psyche, but he psyche is always speaking about *itself*.' (Jung, 1945, §483) In order to avoid a personalistic, positivistic psychology it is essential to maintain a sense of the soul and what it is saying about itself. Then we can see its unfoldings, not just in dream and active imagination, and not just in analysis, but in everyday life.

Aristotle's statement about tragedy as the imitation of an action (praxis), not of human beings helps us see the work of the actor in a new way. Aristotle means by praxis not a particular action, but an 'ideal' action. We should see this 'ideal' action not as a Platonic form of the action 'out there', but as something resembling more an 'archetypal' action in Jung's sense, which is immanent in the realised action of tragedy, quickening and directing it. The actor's job is then not to imitate a particular person, which would constitute impersonation, rather than acting. He must open as it were a channel to the archetypal, and allow it to speak through him, and thus disclose the universal by rendering the particular as Aristotle puts it.

The actor must not work only from his conscious ego and his conscious memories. If he does, the result will be limited and sterile. The true actor is also a sounding board for something much wider and deeper. As Peter Brook puts it: 'An actor mustn't only present what he understands: he will pull the mystery of his part to his own level. He must let the part sound out in him all that he could never reach alone.' (Brook, 1988, p.54) Joseph Chaikin emphasises this: 'One actor in his acting expresses himself and touches nothing outside of himself. Another actor, in expressing himself, touches zones of being which can potentially be recognised by anyone.' (Chaikin, 1991, p.1) The essential attitude for the actor is that of serving the image, which is always greater than himself, rather than using the image to serve him (for example to make him feel important, or to escape his conscious personality).

If the actor's body remains stuck in the habits of the normal and the everyday then his response to the role must be limited. This opening up to the role can and does feel uncomfortable and dangerous, just as the breaking up of the familiar is always disturbing. It is in a sense a kind of Dionysian dismemberment. Yet this must occur, in the body realm as well as the thinking and feeling realm, or the actor will never do justice to the role; something will always be held back. As always, Dionysus requires the break-up of the normal and the institutional, the very bulwarks that we create against the radical 'other.' As Joseph Chaikin says:

> What limits the discoveries a person can make is the idea or image he may come to have of himself. The image can come about through his investment in his own reputation, through an involvement with approval and disapproval, or through feelings of nostalgia stemming from his desire to repeat his first discoveries. In any case, when his image becomes fixed, it limits him from going on to further discoveries. (Chaikin, 1991, p. 1)

One may compare what happens to the actor to ritual possession. Here too an archetypal praxis is performed and an archetypal image becomes visible for the assembled congregation. The limited 'human being' aspects of the performer are ignored. What matters is that he becomes a vessel for the god. This emptying out of the person who performs may be seen most spectacularly in the work of Polish dramaturge, Grotowski. As Peter Brook describes it:

> Grotowski's work leads him deeper and deeper into the actor's inner world, to the point where the actor ceases to be actor and becomes essential man. For this, all the dynamic elements of drama are needed, so that every cell of the body can be pushed to reveal its secrets… as the action goes deeper, everything external must wither away until at the end there is no more theatre, no more actor, no more audience – only a solitary man playing out his ultimate drama alone. (Brook, 1988, p. 41)

However, it should be re-emphasised that all this inner preparation, all the exercises, all the rehearsals and improvisations which help the actor in his search for the soul of the role count for nothing if it is not represented on the stage so that the audience may fully receive it. Theatre consists of the presentation of an image to the spectators. The only point to the preparation work of the actor is to make the image live. Only when this occurs can the theatrical event truly take place. Then the mask of the actor can begin to resemble the mask of Dionysus. As Otto says,

> …the mask tells us that the theophany of Dionysus, which is different from that of the other gods because of its stunning assault on the senses and its urgency, is linked with the eternal enigmas of duality and paradox. This theophany thrusts Dionysus violently and unavoidably into the here and now – and sweeps him away at the same time into the inexpressible

distance. It excites with a nearness which is at the same time a remoteness. The final secrets of existence and non-existence transfix mankind with monstrous eyes. (Otto, 1965. p.91)

THE BACCHAE

Euripides' *The Bacchae* is uniquely valuable for this enquiry because it is a play which concerns the god Dionysus and the nature of theatre itself. As Charles Segal says in his penetrating study, *Dionysian Poetics and Euripides' Bacchae*,

> By bringing Dionysus himself on the stage and symbolically enacting the power of Dionysiac illusion, Euripides raises and explores the question of how the falsehood of (dramatic) fiction can bring us truth, how by surrendering ourselves and losing ourselves to the power of imagination we can in some measure find ourselves, discover or recover some hidden, unfamiliar part of our identity. (Segal, 1997, p.217)

In the first place, Dionysus stands before the audience, or rather, a man playing the role of a god appears on the stage. As the play unfolds the god pretends to be a man, or rather the actor playing the role pretends to be a god pretending to be a man. The audience is required to have a kind of double vision. On the one hand, it is fully involved in what occurs on stage: We are told that at the first performance of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, when the furies entered, women miscarried and children fainted. On the other hand, as we have seen there is also a sense of detachment. This distance allows the audience to appreciate the play as a whole and crucially encourages reflection on what it witnesses. Without the involvement, the experience of taking part in the performance, the reflection would be valueless. And without the detached reflection there would be merely a loss of consciousness.

This doubleness of perspective is profoundly Dionysian: He is a god who is both very near and very distant and, as we have seen, his mask symbolises this double epiphany. We see it also reflected in the fact that in *The Bacchae*, Dionysus is represented as a wild barbarian god and simultaneously a god of civilised city life. So it is that the play can be both a finished artwork and a spontaneous, unique event and the theatre can function both as a safe container and as a vessel for radical metamorphosis.

It is important to emphasise here that Dionysus contains both the opposites. It is not necessary to follow Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*, when he sets up an opposition between Apollo (as form) and Dionysus (as content). Dionysus is complete in himself, as is every god. It is only from an Apollonic perspective that he appears to be chaotic, dangerous and formless. Psyche too has been and is still feared as frighteningly irrational, failing to fit into either a perspective that favours spirit (philosophy or theology) or matter (science or medicine). As we shall see, Dionysus is dangerous but the danger is to the ego, not the soul.

The play begins. Dionysus stands alone on the stage and says, 'Here I am, I have come.' The god of tragic fiction has arrived suddenly, as always. He is both in Thebes and here, now, before us, the audience. He is to be both an actor in what is played before us, and what we would in modern theatrical parlance, the director – manipulating the plot, which will lead to his recognition as a god, both by the Thebans and by the audience.

In *The Bacchae*, Dionysus is described repeatedly in terms of magic, miracle and wonder. In Jungian terms, this tells us that where Dionysus is we should expect synchronicity. (Jung, 1951, §995) This underlines the fact that a Dionysian logos is concerned with the interplay between matter and spirit. As von Franz says, synchronicity

'is the manifestation of a concrete living principle which can not be described as dead matter, or as 'only' psychic (with the implication of not being connected with matter).' (Von Franz, 2001, p.183) When she goes on to describe synchronicity as 'a power which brings forth acts of creation in time,' the parallels with the Dionysian realm are underlined.

Throughout the play, Euripides emphasizes the theme of illusion. Dionysus creates various apparitions which confuse and undermine Pentheus' sense of his own authority: Pentheus is described as imagining he is chaining up the stranger though never touching him, seeing flames where there are none, and stabbing at an airy phantom of a bull, which Dionysus has created. Again and again the attention of the audience is drawn to the illusions which the god can bring, and by extension, to the fictive, symbolic aspect of a theatre in which we never see what is literally there. This Dionysian seeing is an experience, which carries meaning only if all those involved, actors and audience, enter the de-literalised world of imagination. The structures of authority in everyday life need, like Pentheus' palace, to crash to the ground, revealing themselves as merely another imaginal construct.

Euripides points to the radical otherness of the Dionysian perspective by his repeated use of verbs for 'seeing' in the play: 'Did you see, as is likely, Bacchus jostle the palace of Pentheus?' says the stranger as he walks calmly out of his prison (605). Here, as in many other places, the subjective act of perception is emphasised as against the objective fact of what is perceived. Theatre is a place for seeing, and how you see is important. Pentheus' monolithic positivistic way of seeing first cracks here: he 'seems' to have bound the stranger, the palace 'looks' as if it is burning, he 'seems' to be stabbing the bull. This is contrasted with the stranger, who sits nearby, 'quietly watching'.

When Pentheus first interrogates the stranger about his god, he asks him, 'How did you see him? In a dream, or face to face?' (468) For Pentheus, there are only two ways

to see, one valid and one invalid, either the god was there or he wasn't. The stranger replies obliquely: '›rôn ›rônta' 'I saw him seeing me'. As Vernant says, this reply

> stresses that the god's epiphany has nothing to do with the dichotomy that shapes the convictions of Pentheus…The vision demanded by the masked god is something far beyond those two forms of knowledge, of which it makes a mockery. It is based on the meeting of two gazes in which (as in the interplay of reflecting mirrors), by the grace of Dionysus, a total reversibility is established between the devotee who sees and the god who is seen, where each one is, in relation to the other, at once the one who sees and the one who makes himself seen. (Vernant, 1990, p.393)

The relation of audience to actor similarly partakes of this reversibility, as does the relation of actor to role.

Moreover, the relation of the ego to the radical otherness which is the unconscious is far from being that of subject observing object. When we encounter the unconscious, it may sometimes feel as though we see it, but if we are open to the experience, it may quite as often be a case of it seeing us. The dichotomy itself ceases to bear meaning. Better is the pregnant phrase, '›rôn ›rônta', 'I saw him seeing me'.

As long as we distance ourselves from the experience of otherness that the unconscious and everything that it brings us necessarily possesses, pretending that we are not *in* it but 'just looking', then we will be like the Guard in Alice Through the Looking Glass, who looked at Alice 'first through a telescope, then through a microscope, and then through an opera-glass. At last he said, 'You're going the wrong way,' and shut up the window and went away.' To the ordinary day-vision of subject and object, the unconscious does indeed appear to be going 'the wrong way'.

In this context von Franz's already quoted observations on the effect of participating in the dream as though it were a drama are relevant: 'One sees oneself for a moment through the eyes of another, of something objective which views one from the outside, as it were.' (Von Franz, 1998, p.7) If we look at active imagination, this aspect becomes even more prominent. In *Mysterium Coniunctionis* Jung talks about the experience of active imagination and in two places he uses the image of the theatre as the one best suited to his subject. First, he gives a practical description of what the active imaginer can expect. As the images begin to flow, he says, we can either sit back and enjoy it as an entertainment *out there,* or we may start to see that 'The piece that is being played does not want merely to be watched impartially, it wants to compel [the imaginer's] *participation.* If [the imaginer] understands that his own drama is being performed on this inner stage, he cannot remain indifferent to the plot and its denouement.' (Jung, 1955-6, §706)

Later Jung comes back to this image. He talks about the way in which modern man may experience the reality of the psychic process: 'Although, to a certain extent, he looks on from outside, impartially, he is also an acting and suffering figure in the drama of the psyche.' (Jung, 1955-6, §753) So long as you just stare at the pictures, Jung says, nothing transformative happens and nothing will happen. But…

> If you recognize your own involvement, you yourself must enter into the process with your personal reactions, just as if you were one of the fantasy figures, or rather, *as if the drama being enacted before your eyes were real.* It is a psychic fact that this fantasy is happening, and it *is as real as you - as a psychic entity - are* real. (Jung, 1955-6, §753)

Jung introduces these passages by saying that the active imaginer must stare at his 'contemptible fantasy' until one day his eyes will open, 'or as the alchemists say, until the

fish's eyes, or the sparks, shine in the dark solution.' (Jung, 1955-6, §752) This reference is significant because it takes us back to a passage in 'On the Nature of the Psyche' in which Jung states that in his view these multiple luminosities correspond to tiny conscious phenomena. (Jung, 1954b, §388-396) What is striking here is the way in which Jung plays with ideas of subjectivity and objectivity. The active imaginer is portrayed both as an audience member who sees his personal dramas played out on the stage *and* as acting suffering figure in the drama of the psyche. This is underscored by the reference to the alchemist who, we are told, starts to *see* at the exact moment when the fishes' eyes start to shine, i.e. when he begins to *be seen*.

We have then three crucial areas where image is observed: the dream regarded by the dreamer, the *vera imaginatio* of the active imaginer, and the *opus alchemicum* of the artifex. All three acknowledge a complex mixture of observation, participation and detachment and this is precisely what we find in the theatrical model.

It is possible to see something of this in a short series of dreams by a young painter who had been addicted to heroin for four years[iii]. There were several dreams in which the dreamer saw a long kind of screen on which there were moving abstract designs, and these designs had a distant, background character. In a later dream, he saw that there were human figures on the screen, moving and interacting. In the dream, the dreamer was interested by what was occurring on the screen but watched it from afar. It had, as it were, nothing to do with him. Finally, he had a dream in which he watched the figures on the screen as before, when, to his surprise they turned outward, toward him, and met his gaze. In the dream he thought, 'Ah, this isn't just a screen. It's real.'

This breakthrough dream occurred at a stage of the analysis when he was beginning to see that there was more to life than heroin. The dreams mark a movement from a primarily *aesthetic* view of life, where the artist exists in his own subjective world, and the world 'out there' is two dimensional, at first merely a background forming abstract

patterns, which can only be related to in a cut-off (an)aesthetic way. Then the patterns become human figures. There is the beginning of the possibility of relatedness, i.e. by becoming human figures they come much closer to the dreamer. A conscious connection is at least conceivable. Nonetheless, the figures relate only to themselves, and exist in a parallel 'screen' world, which continues to be cut off from the dreamer who remains radically alone.

It is only with the final dream that the dreamer experiences the uncomfortable and shocking sense that the figures are not only 'real' but that they are looking back at him. Their identity as objects, mere images 'out there' with which the only possible engagement is that of a distanced, aesthetic viewing, is exploded by this meeting of the gaze. We are reminded of Jung's emphasis on the disturbing autonomy of the contents of an active imagination, and the obligation on the active imaginer to engage with them 'as if the drama enacted before your eyes were real'.

Another example illuminates this point still further. In Gerhard Adler's case study *The Living Symbol* he cites several dreams and visions of a woman suffering from claustrophobia in which the image of 'the reflecting eye' recurs.

> I look at myself as if in a mirror (but there is no mirror). I see, quite distinctly, a face which is like mine and yet not like mine; more ethereal and spiritual, the eyes full of life and expression. As soon as I realize what I am seeing I am startled and awaken. (Adler, 1961, p.166)

The dreamer described the dream as 'one of the most important things to have happened'. This dream occurred early in the analysis and Adler comments that it was probably 'an anticipation…a vision of the total personality'. Characteristic of dream and theatre is the paradoxical formula 'like mine and yet not like mine'. Unlike the dream

cited above, the dreamer sees and is seen by an image of herself i.e. the relating that is occurring or must occur is that between ego and Self. As we have seen, this theme of reflection comes up frequently with respect to theatre; Shakespeare, most famously, makes Hamlet opine that the job of theatre is '…to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.' (*Hamlet*, III ii) At any rate, the disturbing quality of the image is present yet again. This time it is sufficiently shocking to wake the dreamer.

A month later the analysand, after three weeks of exhausting struggle with what she regarded as her shadow, she decided to face her 'opponent' more directly. She then had the following active imagination:

> Presently I could feel the opponent as a huge figure looming over me. Then there formed in my mind a definite image of the kind of creature it was and what its face was like. Especially the eyes, which were not human eyes it was clear that this was not my shadow.

Fascinated by the eyes of the figure she continued the active imagination: ' I looked; and I could see, through the angel's eyes, a night sky with stars; but not the sky as we see it above us, but the sky as you would see it if you were in the midst of it'. It was 'an extraordinary and ecstatic experience'. As Adler says, 'with the help of the angel's eyes she can see something not seen before. She makes use of the angel's sight and gains 'insight' through it…. In this mutual act the woman's and the angel's eyes coincide; the opposites of ego and nonego meet and are united in the common 'eye'.

This complex and rich image is very suggestive. It echoes the theme of seeing and being seen but also reminds us of Jung's reference to the active imaginer who 'must stare at his 'contemptible fantasy' until one day his eyes will open or as the alchemists say, until the fish's eyes, or the sparks, shine in the dark solution.' Theatre provides a model for

this reflexive seeing, in which the 'eye' of the audience is met by the eye of the actor, and this mutual eye allows movement past ego day-consciousness into Self-consciousness, imaged by the multiple luminosities of the night sky. This vision marked a critical stage in the woman's analysis. As Adler put it, 'At this point there was no more need to fight and to hold on to the ego but she could open herself up, submit and receive… the cosmic vision.' (Adler, 1961, p.225) Giegerich's description of the Dionysian dismemberment comes to mind:

> Here…is a process in which what has been sought, or feared, or fought, outside, before yourself, unexpectedly catches up with yourself from 'behind' or rather from within yourself. You suddenly discover that it has imperceptibly, stealthily come over you, out of your own depth. (Giegerich, 1998, p.256)

To return to *The Bacchae*, it is in the robing scene, where Pentheus is dressed as a bacchant by Dionysus, that we can see the closest parallels between action as story and action as theatrical event. This is a turning point for Pentheus, he is thereby transformed 'from king to scapegoat, male to female, human to beast-victim.' (Segal, 1997, p.223) Pentheus believes himself to be engaged in a rational plan to disguise himself in order to observe the actions of the maenads. However, as the audience is becoming aware, he is deluded. Firstly, he is unaware of his own deeper motives for voyeurism, though they are betrayed to us by his 'passionate curiosity' (813) and impatient eagerness (820), and then, when dressed, his fantasy of the maenads 'among the bushes, mating like birds, caught in the toils of love' (957-8). But what is particularly interesting for us is the way Dionysus, now in full stage manager mode, uses theatrical means to reel Pentheus in. He is to be costumed as a bacchant. That is, he must become what he wishes to look at.

Thus Dionysus reveals his logos: to see psychologically, i.e. through the imagination, we must forfeit our separate, observer status and become what we see.

The audience's involvement in the play, and the actor's involvement in his role, requires precisely this creative, imaginative, truly psychological abdication of 'self' as radically separate subject. This step involves a giving up of the Cartesian model of observing subject and dead object. Pentheus desires to view what fascinates him while at the same time remaining immune from it. This is an example of what Giegerich has called the contraceptive theory of knowledge, '… a longing for knowledge that allows contact with what is to be known only if 'contraceptives' are used.' (Giegerich, 1998, p.253) The bleak irony of this scene is that what Pentheus believes to be a contraceptive, the maenad costume, identifies him as one of those who have given themselves up to Dionysian knowledge, and thus one who must undergo the fate of both god and victim: dismemberment. Thus the costume here acts like a mask in that it seems to conceal but actually reveals a deeper truth. This irony is deepened when Pentheus, now dressed as a maenad, asks coyly, 'Do I look like anyone, like Ino or my mother Agave?' Both parts, mother and son, would have been played by the same actor. Moreover, as Pentheus, in women's clothes, asks the effeminate stranger how he looks, the audience witnesses a strange doubling, almost a mirroring, which itself echoes Pentheus' 'I seem to see two suns blazing in the heavens. And now two Thebes, two cities…'(918).

It is impossible to analyse fully the effect of these different layers of metaphor on an audience, but what is certain is that all positivistic certainty has been long since shed. As audience members taking part in a theatrical event, our vision is already double but here Euripides masterfully ensures that we have the queasy experience of looking at a mirror reflecting a mirror reflecting a mirror… Pentheus' desire to become a spectator, to watch safely from afar, reminds us that this is what we, as audience members, seem to be engaged in. However, far from being an objective witness of events, a hidden onlooker,

Pentheus is to become the protagonist in what ensues and full though unwilling participant in the drama. Indeed his participation 'will prove necessary to the full performance of the rites that he would witness' (Segal, 1997, p.225), and this tells us that in some sense we too must undergo his fate, by sacrificing the safety of distance and sympathetically experiencing the fóbo$ and ®leo$, fear and pity, which according to Aristotle constitute catharsis, and that this itself is necessary for the full performance of the rites of Dionysus.

What we are sacrificing is the Cartesian split of mind and body, inner and outer, objective and subjective, which allows us to observe the world with the security of distance. As analysts, this is a security we cannot afford. As Jung says,

> 'The psychotherapist should no longer labour under the delusion that the treatment of neurosis demands nothing more than the knowledge of a technique; he should be absolutely clear in his own mind that psychological treatment of the sick is a *relationship* in which the doctor is involved quite as much as the patient.' (Jung, 1934, §352)

THEATRE AND PARADOX

As we have seen, the logos of Dionysus is pre-eminently paradoxical. As a god, he holds together the opposites of life and death, mortal and immortal, male and female, Greek and barbarian. No single statement about him is complete; if we call him the principle of indestructible life we have to remind ourselves that he is also Hades, if we call him an immortal god we must bear in mind that he died, if we call him a phallic god we are corrected by the tragedians, who calls him 'the womanly one' and 'the womanly stranger.'

The Bacchae is itself a paradoxical play. Some critics have taken it to be a glorification of Dionysus, others a savage critique. If we want a play to give us one single message then *The Bacchae* will surely seem unsatisfactory. However, if we approach theatre with a paradoxical eye, the Dionysian way of seeing, we will see that it is not a question of either/or but both/and. As Dionysus says in the play, 'Pentheus will come to know Zeus' son, Dionysus, /By nature a god in full perfection, god /Most terrible and to men most mild.' (859-61). As Segal points out,

> To pose an alternative of praise or blame, attraction or horror, is to dissolve that mysterious and perhaps ultimately unformulable coexistence of opposites that is the essence of Dionysus and of the realm of mythic and symbolic representation to which the Dionysiac stands so close, in music, mask, and drama. (Segal, 1997, p.20)

What then has paradox to do with psychology? Though Jung wrote little about paradox, we may gauge its importance from what he does say: 'The self, however, is

absolutely paradoxical in that it represents in every respect thesis and antithesis, and at the same time synthesis.' (Jung, 1944, §22) The achievement of this *coincidentia oppositorum* (i.e. the movement from ego consciousness towards Self consciousness) is for Jung the goal of individuation. It is, however, not an easy thing to manage. Taking paradoxes seriously is a dangerous business and requires spiritual strength. Tertullian said, 'And the Son of God is dead, which is worthy of belief because it is absurd. And when buried He rose again, which is certain because it is impossible.' (*De Carne Christi*, 5) With reference to this Jung says, 'Oddly enough the paradox is one of our most valuable spiritual possessions, while uniformity of meaning is a sign of weakness…Non-ambiguity and non-contradiction are one-sided and thus unsuited to express the incomprehensible.' (Jung, 1944, §18)

In terms of personal psychology, the individual is often drawn to what he perceives as the positive aspects of himself and of life. What he believes he requires from analysis is to be lifted up towards wholeness and the Self. Jungian analysis is often attractive to such a person because of Jung's emphasis on transcendence, and the union of opposites. This attitude betrays a radical misunderstanding of Jung's psychology. As Micklem points out in an important paper, the concept of wholeness is meaningless without its shadow, paradox. As he says, the idea of wholeness seems to be trouble free. 'But the psychological reality tells a different story; its most important image, the self, reveals it as a source of ambiguity and conflict. It can make or mar, purify or destroy.' (Micklem, 2002, p.4)

The symbol par excellence of the Self is the hermaphrodite, monstrous in its duality, which has recurred throughout history, not only as an indicator of transformation within the personality but reaching, as Jung says, the highest levels of culture. We find it prominently in Gnosticism and in alchemy (as the *prima materia* and *lapis philosophorum*, the beginning and end of the opus). Its importance stems from its irreducible duality and it

is this duality itself which is the 'essential transforming ingredient'. The hermaphrodite is, of course, a paradoxical image.

To encounter the Self, then, requires us to live with paradox, and this inevitably means 'following a way of unresolved conflicts with but fleeting moments of harmony.' (Micklem, 2002, p.14) The alchemists emphasised that the chemical wedding occurs only after long strife between the 'quarrelling couples' of sulphur and mercury, body and spirit. Jung pointed out that, since the enlightenment, paradox has been consistently rejected as a logical absurdity that can have no place in a world of science. It was the establishment of the hegemony of ego-consciousness with Descartes that effected this shift. As we have seen, the one-sidedness of untrammelled ego-consciousness is unable to perceive paradox. It can only see one thing at a time and cannot bear contradiction. As Micklem says,

> 'the direct contradiction of paradox would be readily understandable and trouble free if the opposing truths did not appear together in the same place and at the same time. It presents the disturbing situation of an alien encounter casting doubt on the solid reliability of time and space… It is as if a strange dimension of the psyche enters consciousness, bringing uncertainty and making nonsense of familiar mental orientation.' (Micklem, 2002, p.18)

One is inevitably reminded of Pentheus' disorientation in the face of Dionysus. If, however, unlike Pentheus, we are able to begin to think in paradox, 'it implies a move has taken place beyond an exclusively ego orientated view of reality to a wider appreciation of human nature.' Micklem draws out the implications of such a move for psychotherapy. Perhaps the most important of these is a vision of illness, not as something to be got rid of, but as something that 'must be accepted and rejected at the same time.' Only this approach can be truly holistic. Yet it demands,

> 'two levels of consciousness at the same time, and that – so it is said in psychological circles – is an impossibility. But is it really impossible or merely accepted as impossible because the exclusive demands of ego consciousness are taken for granted as defining the limits of the psyche?' (Micklem, 2002, p.23)

Until the First World War, literary critics had worked under the assumption that a writer could mean only one thing at a time. It was acknowledged that certain lines in Shakespeare, for example, seemed ambiguous, capable of implying two or more meanings, but it was supposed that he must have meant one of them to be primary. Although a careful reader might notice various possible meanings for a passage, most would interpret it as meaning only one of these and ignore the others. By extension, any one of Shakespeare's plays, however rich in allusion, could only be intended to carry one possible interpretation (though different critics might disagree as to what that was). However, this approach relegated certain plays to the category 'problem play' because it was by no means clear which single interpretation should be adopted. For example, in *Measure for Measure*, there were radical disagreements: is the Duke a semi-divine figure or a Machiavellian manipulator, is Isabella an 'affected prude' or an 'honestly conceived heroine'? Analytic criticism required an either/or judgement on these matters and with *Measure for Measure* this didn't seem possible. The play was accordingly dismissed as 'morally or artistically untrue.'

In Cambridge in the late 1920s there emerged a new way of tackling these matters. William Empson's book *Seven Types of Ambiguity* broke new ground in that it suggested that the either/or paradigm was unequal to the task of examining a work like *Measure for Measure*. The solution was to admit the simultaneous validity of contradictory readings. Empson's book works its way up from first order ambiguities, in which 'a word, a syntax,

or a grammatical structure, while making only one statement, is effective in several ways at once,' (Empson, 1961, p.3) to ambiguities of the seventh type in which 'the two meanings of the word, the two values of the ambiguity, are the two opposite meanings defined by the context, so that the total effect is to show a fundamental division in the writer's mind.' (Empson, 1961, p.244) That is to say, a paradox. Empson acknowledges that one influence in the formulation of this idea is the dream work of depth psychology, 'in which the notion of what you want involves the notion that you must not take it.'

Another crucial influence, as Jonathan Bate has pointed out, is that of quantum physics:

> Erwin Schrödinger demonstrated mathematically that a hydrogen atom may have two energies at once, something impossible under previous atomic theory; William Empson demonstrated critically that a text may have two contradictory meanings at once, something impossible under previous literary theory. (Bate, 1998, p.315)

According to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, it is impossible to specify both position and momentum of a subatomic particle because the process of observing the position of a particle disturbs the particle's momentum and vice versa. As Empson worked on *Seven Types of Ambiguity* he read the following in A. S. Eddington's *The Nature of the Physical World*: 'The principle of indeterminacy is epistemological. It reminds us once again that the world of physics is a world contemplated from within, surveyed by appliances which are part of it and subject to its laws.' (Eddington, 1928, p.225) Like a quantum-event, an ambiguity is brought into being by an observer's perception of it.

It may seem that we have strayed far from both Jungian psychology and the Dionysian logos of theatre. A few reflections will make it clear that this is not the case. First, Jung's thoughts on the new physics did not begin with his collaboration with Pauli.

He recalled that he met Einstein in the 'very early days when [he] was developing his first theory of relativity… His genius as a thinker… exerted a lasting influence on my own intellectual work'. (Jung, Letter to Carl Seelig, 25th February 1953, in Jung, 1972, p.109) This is seen most clearly in his work on what he would come to call synchronicity, first mentioned (as 'synchronism') in the Dream Seminars of 1928, where he also refers to causality as 'the modern prejudice of the west.' (Jung 1928-30, pp.44-45) But Jung was also interested in the implications of indeterminacy and this influenced his idea that psyche and matter might be different aspects of the same reality. In fact, as Beverly Zabriskie points out, 'The development of Jung's thought and that of physics in the first half of the twentieth century are both complementary and symmetrical.' (Jung/Pauli, 2001, p.xxx) Jung's work does for the psyche what Heisenberg and his colleagues were doing for physics, Empson for literary criticism and Wittgenstein for philosophy. The positivist world-view that had held sway since Newton in science and Descartes in philosophy is seen to be fatally undermined.

Empson finds his clearest examples of seventh level ambiguity in the plays of Shakespeare, which are saturated in paradox, from his use of a word as small as 'not': ('Shakespeare's use of the negative is nearly always slight and casual; he is much too interested in a word to persuade himself that it is 'not' there, and that one must think of the opposite of its main meaning') to his creation of whole plays like *Measure for Measure* which are radically ambiguous.

However, these paradoxical elements in the *content* of Shakespeare's plays are directly related to his background as a thoroughgoing man of the theatre, which is, after all, the paradoxical *form* par excellence. Because he spent his life working, as writer and actor, in the world of the theatre, which essentially depends on two simultaneous levels of consciousness (actor as performer and as role, reality and illusion), it came naturally to him to see man and nature as paradoxical. In the theatre, we are presented with multiple

perspectives. There is no single authorial voice and so no single 'truth' is revealed to us. Shakespeare is revered as a world genius because, above all others, he exemplifies this quality. Hazlitt says of him, 'He was nothing in himself; but he was all that others were, or that they could become… He had only to think of any thing in order to become that thing, with all the circumstances belonging to it…The poet may be said, for the time, to identify himself with the character he wishes to represent, and to pass from one to another, like the same soul successively animating different bodies.' (Hazlitt, 1944, p.72)

Jorge Luis Borges wrote a parable about a man who became 'proficient in the habit of simulating that he was someone.' Having been an actor, he becomes a writer for the theatre. 'No-one has ever been so many men as this man who like the Egyptian Proteus could exhaust all the guises of reality… The fundamental identity of existing, dreaming and acting inspired famous passages of his.' Borges says that 'before or after dying he found himself in the presence of God and told Him:

> 'I who have been so many men in vain want to be one and myself.' The voice of the Lord answered from a whirlwind: 'Neither am I anyone; I have dreamt the world as you dreamt your work, my Shakespeare, and among the forms in my dream are you, who like myself are many and no one.' (Borges, 1970, pp.284-5)

From the psychological point of view, this absence of single perspective may be seen as a refusal to allow the ego to pursue its heroic narrative. Whereas most literary forms encourage an identification with a single figure and tend to follow the progress of a hero, the drama tends to work against this. In Shakespeare, this emphasis on the multiple perspective works to make moral judgements ambiguous and he helps this process along by refusing his characters easy motivations. When we compare the narratives in his plays with those in his sources, it is remarkable how often he removes obvious motivation.

For example in the source for *Othello*, Iago is motivated by his love for Desdemona, but in the finished play, no explanation is given for his malevolence. In this way, the drama is allowed to retain the dream-like quality which is fundamental to the theatrical experience. It turns the day-world perspective of cause and effect on its head. Like initiands in the liminal world, we, the audience, never quite know where or who we are. Our monocular ego vision is given nothing to hang on to: morality becomes ambiguous, action discontinuous, and even identity becomes a problem. Iago says, 'I am not what I am,' (*Othello*, 1.1.65) but many other characters might have said the same.

Shakespeare presents us with perspectives that seem to be incompatible, and yet are somehow held together. As an audience to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* we participate in the everyday world of Theseus and Athens and also the night world of Oberon and the fairies. It is not a question of either/or but of both/and. The actor playing the part of Bottom does not choose between thinking of himself as, on the one hand, a man standing on a stage before an audience, reciting words he has learned, or, on the other, as an Athenian weaver in the forest who has been given an asses head. He is both simultaneously. And the audience knows that he is both. This is directly comparable to the paradoxical world of dreams, in which a figure can be my sister and yet not my sister. Shakespeare delights in images which underline this 'fundamental identity of existing, dreaming and acting.' The best examples are found in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*:

> Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
> When everything seems double. (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 4.1.188-9

> These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits…

…We are such stuff

As dreams are made on, and our little life

Is rounded with a sleep. (*The Tempest*, 4.1.148-158)

He multiplies images of the performative nature of theatre almost ad absurdum. For example, in *King Lear*, Edgar leads Gloucester to the edge of Dover Cliff. Here one actor, pretends to be someone pretending to be someone else, then leads another actor, who is pretending to be blind, across a flat stage while pretending to be going up a hill then pretends to pretend to the second actor that he is on the edge of a cliff. In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare presents us with Rosalind, (who would in Shakespeare's day have been a man pretending to be a woman) pretending to be a man (Ganymede) pretending to be a woman (Rosalind).

A separate though related subject is that of conflict. As psychotherapists our attitude to conflict is crucial. Conflict makes up as it were the bread and butter of analytical work. Jung frequently emphasizes that when we are in conflict and torn between the opposites the necessity is to stay with the tension of the conflict and fully experience it. Only then can the third thing come in which somehow moves us on to a new level. In order to allow this to happen it is essential that we are able to truly see the conflict. This seeing takes the form of a reflection that refuses to allow identification with either pole. It is this kind of seeing which finds a model in theatre, and particularly tragedy. Here life is imaged as inescapably nailed to the cross of the opposites. The Greeks used the term 'agon' (¡gµn), literally a contest or struggle, to describe the verbal duel between two of the protagonists in the drama, but in fact all theatre depends on the playing out of conflict between the characters.

As we have seen, the primary difference between epic and drama is the shift from the single viewpoint of the narrator to the multiple perspective. We can see this shift most clearly in the contrast between the two performance modes. In the former a bard sang/recited the verse to his audience in a hypnotically rhythmic and repetitive way, so that the listeners were drawn in and identified with him. As Havelock describes it, 'He sank his personality into his performance. His audience in turn…entered effectively and sympathetically into what he was saying and this in turn meant that they became his servants and submitted to his spell.' (Havelock, 1982, p.160)

In tragedy however, simple identification is not possible due to the multiple perspectives offered by the characters. The audience of the play is not told what to make of the arguments of the various characters, nor for the duration of the play is it expected to come down on one side or the other. Its task is to sit with this unavoidable conflict and stay with it to the end. Lopez says that the audience leaves a tragedy in a state of 'fruitful perturbation.' (Lopez-Pedraza, 2000, p.91) It is perturbed because there is no easy resolution to the conflict, but the fruitfulness of this state stems from the fact that there has been room for reflection – a psychological reflection which is both engaged and detached, in and out. The birth of tragedy signals the genesis of this new, psychological, being in the world.

Clinically, the theatrical model offers a useful perspective. Not only does it help us approach the dream, as we have seen, with a way of avoiding the pitfalls of regarding the dream text as a narrative of ego adventures, but it can enable us to free up an often limiting approach to who or what we are. The ideal of ego-strength and wholeness has sometimes meant an undue emphasis on self-identity in personality. Analysis becomes a search for 'who we really are' as if this were one identifiable thing. In this fantasy, the fixed death mask of our persona conceals and fails to do justice to the living depths of our 'real' self. However, rather than renounce all masks, it seems to me that a flexible

multi-masking approach is more true to Jung's picture of the psyche as essentially multiple. 'One man in his time plays many parts,' not only in a life, but in a day.

'If', as Nor Hall suggests,

> we understand neurosis as a disease of limited repertoire, then expanding the repertoire becomes the primary intent of any course of therapy seeking to loosen anxious limits and deconstruct rigidities constructed by fear. In the region of impoverished repertoire, one role gets played over and over again. The script stays the same. The subject never changes. (Hall, 1994, p.85)

In my clinical experience these 'rigidities constructed by fear' are very common. One patient in particular, who for many years has led a remarkably stunted life dominated by anxiety, tells me how she, for once, stood up for herself, but invariably goes on to say: 'It wasn't like me.' Much of our work together has been concerned with a painfully gradual movement out of the iron constraints of what she believes is 'like' her, so that she can now, with some trepidation, take on the role of someone with confidence, someone who shouts, or someone who can express her love.

OBJECT AND SUBJECT

Jung was concerned with ideas of subjectivity and objectivity from early on. In *Memories Dreams Reflections*, he recalled an episode from his childhood:

> Often when I was alone, I sat down on [a] stone, and then began an imaginary game that went something like this: 'I am sitting on top of this stone and it is underneath.' But the stone also could say 'I' and think: 'I am lying here on this slope and he is sitting on top of me.' The question then arose: 'Am I the one who is sitting on the stone, or am I the one on which *he* is sitting?' This question always perplexed me, and I would stand up, wondering who was what now. The answer remained totally unclear, and my uncertainty was accompanied by a feeling of curious and fascinating darkness. (Jung 1963, pp.35-6)

Evidently, Jung was not satisfied by the strict separation of subject (I in here) and object (the world out there). His feeling of 'curious and fascinating darkness' was to bear fruit in a psychology which did much to undo the dichotomy.

This splitting of subject and object was by no means a given in the human mind. As we have seen, the main characteristic of pre-modern consciousness is participation in nature, or God, or the gods. Characteristic of this are ideas like the *anima mundi*, microcosm and macrocosm, the great chain of being etc. and the ubiquity of magic. Hence, the opposition of subject and object did not arise. However, with the development of the modern ego the human subject is placed at the centre of metaphysics and psychology. For us, the heirs to this tradition, the object/subject split is an inveterate habit of thought, which takes a lot of unthinking to see through. Nonetheless, the twentieth century witnessed several parallel attempts to undermine this assumption.

In quantum physics, as we have seen, Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle established the fact that the observer alters the observed by the mere act of observation. This was important because until this point it was precisely the *scientific* perspective which had underpinned the whole subject/object split. Classical science depends upon the idea of a subject observing an object 'objectively' i.e. in a radically independent stance. It could not have developed without the assumption that this could occur. Now Heisenberg and his colleagues were saying that at the very heart of matter such objectivity was impossible.

Jung made a similar point from a psychological perspective. First, as Jung frequently pointed out, there was no Archimedean point from which the psyche could observe the psyche, so psychology could never hope to attain the objectivity considered necessary to classical science. Moreover, while Descartes and modern thought in general assumed a unitary subject, the ego, to set against the object, depth psychology, and particularly that of Jung, was based upon the idea that the psyche consisted of, not only a conscious ego but an unconscious other. Psychoanalysis grew out of observations of dissociation: multiple personality, mediumism, hypnosis etc, all of which seemed to imply the possibility that the psyche was far from unitary. Jung's work on the dream and active imagination seemed to muddy the clear water of Cartesian dualism even more.

The figures which inhabited our dreams existed in a world which seemed to be neither subjective nor objective, or perhaps both. For Jung this was the world of the image, and it was crucial because, as he said, 'Image is Psyche.' (Jung, 1929, §75) By developing his idea of the Self, Jung acknowledged something in the psyche which seemed to work as a rival to the conscious ego, and appeared to have a kind of consciousness of its own:

> To concern ourselves with dreams is a way of reflecting on ourselves, a way of self-reflection. It is not our ego-consciousness reflecting on itself: rather, it turns its attention to the objective

> actuality of the dream. . . It reflects not on the ego but on the Self; it recollects the strange self, alien to the ego, which was ours from the beginning, the trunk from which the ego grew. (Jung 1933, §318)

As Paul Kugler comments,

> Approaching the dream in this manner unsettles the boundaries between subject and object, self and other, inside and outside, the living and the dead, subverting at the same time the symmetry that founds their traditional opposition. By placing primacy on the intermediary realm of images, the founding polarities of Western metaphysics are undercut and we are less bound by their dichotomous structures and hierarchies. (Kugler, 1993)

Looked at in one way, i.e. from the point of view of the unconscious, the conscious ego which we are so used to thinking of as the *subject* of our perceiving and thinking, becomes the *object*:

> 'The ego stands to the self as the moved to the mover, or as object to subject, because the determining factors which radiate out from the self surround the ego and are therefore superordinate to it . . . It is not I who creates myself, rather I happen to myself.' (Jung, 1954a, §391)

Yet, as Jung goes on to say, this is not the whole story. Essential to the conscious ego is the sense that it enjoys a feeling of freedom, which depends on it not being completely conditioned by another factor (the Self). The terms, subject and object, belonging as they do to a dualistic perspective, are then not sufficient to engage with a psychic reality which seems radically ambiguous: 'In reality both are always present: the supremacy of the self and the hybris of consciousness.' (Jung, 1954a, §391)

It is interesting to approach this problem from another direction. The question of a subjective and objective approach to the world was of great importance to Romantic poets and critics. The point at issue was whether the poet was *subjective*, in that his works revealed primarily the workings of his own mind, or *objective*, in that poetic creation entailed a true relation with nature as it is. This debate often revolved around the figure of Shakespeare. Was Shakespeare, held up as the great poetic genius of all time, objective or subjective? For Schiller, (quoted in Abrams, 1953, p.238) because 'the object possesses him utterly' Shakespeare, like God, is not visible in his work. For Schlegel he was, on the contrary, inveterately subjective: 'It has often been remarked, that the original impress of his individual manner is unmistakable and inimitable.' (Abrams, 1953, p.239) It soon occurred to Schlegel that they might both be right; qualities of objectivity and subjectivity might not be incompatible in that the poet may at he same time be in, and aloof from, his own dramas. The parallel that presented itself to Schlegel was theological and extended Schiller's simile: perhaps the poet was like a God who both stood behind his work and yet is himself the work.

For Coleridge, who was greatly influenced by the German romantic critics, this question of objective and subjective approaches was crucial. He distinguished two philosophical approaches to the relation of self and nature: first, that of Hobbes, Locke and Hartley who emphasised the effects of nature on an impressionable mind, and second, that of Fichte and Berkeley for whom the action and innate qualities of the mind were primary. Neither system denied either conscious mind or matter, but each made one dependent of the other. Coleridge sought to find a position which somehow combined the two, in which the subjective and objective poles intertwine and fuse, spirit informs matter, and a dynamic synthesis and coalescence of both systems occur. In experienced life, thought and reality are indistinguishable, 'of which no man can say positively which is the voice and which the echo.' (Coleridge, 1895, p.143) Our

intelligent self-consciousness is inseparable from our perceptions of the world. The border between self and nature seems ambiguous: 'we receive but what we give/ And in our life alone does Nature live.' (Coleridge, 1957, l. 47-8)

It is the imagination which allows this synthesis, and through it man becomes not an alienated fortress or island but a part of an organic whole, a special creature in whom lives the whole. For Coleridge the imagination is 'an intermediate faculty, which is at once both active and passive.' (Coleridge, 1985, p.123) It must receive something from nature and something from the mind's own self-reflection as well before it can produce a symbolic bond between the two. Thus the subjective pole of being and the objective pole of natural phenomena 'interpenetrate' through the imagination. This is possible because the imaginative faculty is *itself* part of the creative and shaping spirit of nature. Compare these ideas with this from Jung: '(The) autonomous activity of the psyche, which can be explained neither as a reflex action to sensory stimuli nor as the executive organ of eternal ideas, is, like every vital process, a continually creative act.' (Jung, 1921, §78)

Coleridge emphasises that any attempt to analyse or explain an imagination which unites subjective and objective experiences must necessarily murder to dissect: 'There is here no first, and no second, both are coinstantaneous and one.' They 'are so instantly united, that we cannot determine to which of the two the priority belongs.' (Coleridge, 1985, p.255)

In Coleridge's view imaginative art works to express and affirm the harmony between the human individual and the cosmos. As Engell and Bate put it, for Coleridge,

> Imagination belongs neither to the purely subjective nor to the purely objective, neither to the ideal nor to the real, to the spiritual or the concrete. Reconciling and harmonising these opposites, it partakes of both. Coleridge designates it as a force or power, an energy that

> transforms and blends idea and image, thought and thing. It connects external nature to the acts of reflection performed by the inner life of the self-conscious mind. (Coleridge, 1985, lxxxi)

Of course, the pre-eminent genius for Coleridge was Shakespeare, who enjoyed the highest state of imagination, allowing him to recreate in himself numerous vantage points of experience. Coleridge repeatedly compared Shakespeare to Proteus, as one who was able to assume 'all forms of human character and passion.' In 'perfect abstraction from himself', he became all things, yet his images and characters were his own creation. Thus he also was 'for ever remaining himself.' (Coleridge, 1977, 3247)

For Jung too, the imagination is the psychological faculty par excellence. ' . . . the psyche consists essentially of images. It is a series of images in the truest sense.' (Jung 1926, §618) If image is psyche then the imagination is crucial to everything psychic. The dream image is psychic and therefore it cannot be reduced to the objective world it seems to represent. For example, the image of the parents in a dream cannot be said to refer to the actual parents: 'Interpretation in terms of the parents is, however, simply a 'facon de parler'. In reality the whole drama takes place in the individual's own psyche, where the 'parents' are not the parents at all but only their imagos…' (Jung, 1952, §505) This does not mean, however, that the dream images are purely subjective. They are above the objective/subjective split, partaking in both aspects.

When Jung comes to talk about active imagination, he emphasises its capacity to maintain the tension of the seeming opposites, 'just as a waterfall connects above and below'. The tendency is for the 'observer' of the active imagination to sit back and watch the show. In other words he, the subject, is detached from the content of the active imagination, the object. Then, as Jung says, 'there is no real progress but only endless variations on the same theme, which is not the point of the exercise at all'. What the

observer witnesses 'does not move the observer in any way, and the less it moves him the smaller will be the cathartic affect of this private theatre'. What is required is for him to 'take part in the play', 'although, to a certain extent, he looks on from outside, impartially'.

To extend the metaphor, in the theatre of psyche we are both audience and actor.[iv] Jung chooses the image of theatre to illustrate the reflexive quality of active imagination because theatre provides an enormously rich metaphor for a process which transcends the objective/subjective split, not only because it contains both aspects but also because it reveals how their combined presence is required for transformation. In active imagination this comes through 'a movement [born] out of the suspension between opposites, a living birth that leads to a new level of being, a new situation.' (Jung, 1916/1958, §189) Jung calls this the 'transcendent function.' As we have seen, the audience member is as imaginatively involved in what occurs on stage as the actors. The more the actors are collectively imaginatively engaged in what they are doing, the more the audience will be involved. Moreover, this involvement is sensed by the actors, and itself feeds back into their own engagement, in a kind of collective conspiracy of imagination. It is not, however, a trance-like *folie-á-deux*, for, despite the 'suspension of disbelief' in both actors and audience, all the participants maintain a residual consciousness of the 'unreality' of the events.

To differentiate subject from object in the theatrical event is impossible. It resembles psychic reality in that it is all of a piece. There is no room for a Cartesian split. If we impose one by, for example, positing an audience which observes while obdurately maintaining its disbelief in what is presented, then the theatrical event vanishes. Dissected, it is murdered. What is required is a certain collusion between participants.[v] They must *play* together, and as we all know, the greatest crime in any game is not to

cheat, but to be a spoil-sport: to refuse to acknowledge the rules of the game. This is uniquely destructive because it takes away meaning.

Ultimately, when it comes to the image, it is not a question of *what* you see, but *how* you see. That is to say that the image is not an object, out there, to be perceived. Nor is it merely something subjective, in here. Rather, as D.T. Suzuki says with regard to poetry: '[It] is the something that we see, but the seeing and the something are one; without the seeing there is no something, no something, no seeing. There is neither discovery nor creation: only the perfect, indivisible experience.' (quoted in Blyth, 1942, p.84) So it is with theatre, only twice over, for we not only see but are seen. As Dionysus says to Pentheus, 'I saw him seeing me'.

CONCLUSION

Psychology: a logos of the soul

In 1915 Freud addressed a group of medical students on the subject of psychoanalysis. He was at pains to get across to them that if they wished to learn this new soul-science they would not be able to employ the deductive thinking they used in, for example, neurology. Nor was the empirical observation essential to anatomy going to help. A third way was required. 'One learns psychoanalysis on oneself,' said Freud, then added, 'this is not quite the same thing as what is called self-observation.' (Freud, 1916, p.43) David Miller comments, '[It is] as if he were saying that soul-work is not a matter of ego looking at ego. Rather, there is a deeper seeing and sensing, a way that does not sever intellect and personal experience.' (Miller, 1980, p81)

Ultimately the soul speaks only of itself and it presents itself continuously in dream, myth and fantasy. Our theoria as psychologists must be a way of seeing that does justice to this fact. As Freud says, ordinary thinking, whereby A causes B, and ordinary seeing, whereby A the subject sees B the object, is not up to this task. Jung's genius as a psychologist was to develop this insight and to make it the bedrock of his psychology. He reiterates again and again the crucial importance of image and the imaginal in psychological work, but it was in alchemy that he found the richest mine in terms of sheer profusion of imagery but more importantly in terms of an attitude towards that imagery. His concentrated devotion to the study of alchemy, during the last thirty years of his life, is a testament to the central importance of the alchemical opus to his psychology. He found in alchemy not just a treasure house of archetypal imagery, though it is undoubtedly that, but a crucial parallel to the work of psychology.

What makes the alchemical opus different from a purely mythological approach is the manner of engagement of the artifex, who simultaneously witnesses and undergoes the changes that occur in the substance. He is both inside and outside the vessel. Pre-modern, mythological seeing cannot work in this way because it has no reflective distance. It simply is what it sees. It can only participate, not witness. The creation of the subject/object split in modern consciousness necessitates a new approach. Jung saw that alchemy provided a parallel to his work with the soul, where it is also necessary to be both inside and outside of the analytical vessel. If we merely spectate and maintain too much distance then we remain cut off from what occurs. There can be no transference in depth if we are only observing subject, and no relating can occur. We can neither touch nor be touched. If, on the other hand, we identify with the patient (or the content of an active imagination) there is no room for reflection.

In everyday life we find the first attitude active in those who spend their days watching television from the safety of their sitting rooms. The most appalling, terrifying, disgusting images of actual 'reality' float past them, but because they are cut off, passive viewers their experience is merely that of frustration or cynicism, and over time, a reinforced sense of powerlessness and nihilism. We can see the latter attitude in the taste for extreme experience for its own sake. Here the meaning of life lies the search for bigger and bigger thrills, whether from drugs, sex, bungee-jumping, mountain climbing… Here there is only action and no reflection.

Theatre, however, provides a remarkable parallel to alchemy, and offers us an image of true, reflective engagement. Theatre is made up of precisely these two elements: witnessing and acting. Both must be present or there is no theatre. The true transforming magic of theatre occurs when both aspects somehow become one. Then both actors and audience experience something that both reinforces and somehow transcends their mere humanity. This paradoxical attitude, which gives full weight to the

eternal conflict which makes up psychological life while also simply letting it be, von Franz describes as,

> an open attitude, just as though there were a second consciousness behind consciousness – as if one had in the foreground of one's mind the ordinary operating consciousness, while at the back something realises that that is only a part of life. Thus there is a moveable 'consciousness behind consciousness' which just observes and knows that, for the time being, the thing is so. Jung describes that, on an emotional level, as being right in the storm of the conflict and at the same time out of it and watching it in serenity. (Von Franz, 1980, p.149

Alchemy is the redemption from matter of spirit. This is one way of describing what we as psychologists are engaged in. Our job is to redeem the image from its entanglements in the literal. In order to do this we need a way of seeing which is different from an ordinary literal seeing. This thesis has been concerned with an attempt to grasp what is entailed in this new seeing. The alchemists used what appears to be a nonsensical, contradictory language to describe what they were about. It is frustrating and disorienting to the rational mind, and intentionally so. In alchemy language comes up against the limits of conscious thought, and attempts to go past them. As the language of the unconscious psyche it is necessarily paradoxical.

Alchemical texts cannot be understood by our reason any more than a Zen koan can be understood. Our response to them must be compared o our response to a new dream that is presented to us. If we allow the idea that we 'ought to know the answers' to predominate we will desperately search around for something solid to hold on to. This may be a half-baked theoretical structure, whether Kleinian or 'Jungian' which gives one the comforting sense that one knows what the dream ought to be saying, or it may be simply an irritable reaching after half-remembered certainties like, 'animals are

instincts' or 'water is the unconscious' which gives us a welcome toe-hold in what at first glance looked like a sheer surface.

In both cases we are, in our fear and uncertainty in the face of the unknown, failing in our prime duty to the products of the unconscious psyche, that is, to *listen to the image*, which can only be achieved through the silence of our unknowing. If on the other hand our concern is to fill that silence with our own restless busy ego activity, and we immediately set about actively making an interpretation, we are defensively closing off the very channels through which the images wishes to communicate. If we wish to do more than merely pay lip-service to what Jung called the objective psyche, we have to be open to the fact that psychotherapy does not consist of an analyst doing something to a dream, but rather the dream revealing itself to analyst and patient.[vi] For this to occur the bright lights of ego consciousness need to be turned down in a kind of *abaissement de niveau mental*, so that it becomes possible to discern the dim phosphorescences emanating from the unconscious, the starry heavens and fishes eyes of the alchemists.

As we have seen, in these circumstances it is far from clear what constitutes object and what subject. In such a complex field of interaction it is perhaps more fruitful to talk about the subtle reflexivity and mutuality of vision. This is the arena in which the theatrical model usefully comes into play. The dream is not an anaesthetized patient undergoing intrusive investigation, but a living, shimmering fabric which reveals different facets of itself as the light catches it. It exists only in the meeting of our gaze and its self-revelation, both passive and active. As all we experience is image, this must, in a subtle sense, be true for all human life. When Shakespeare has Prospero say, 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on,' he refers simultaneously to our status as humans and as actors in 'the great theatre of the world', and thus equates dream, life and theatre. The mysterious and ultimately unanalysable grandeur of the line stems from a deep intuition about the paradoxical nature of the image. It is in its ability to do justice to the complex

ambiguities present in this mode of seeing that the theatrical model stands out. It uniquely conveys what it is to touch and be touched by image. Active and passive, present and absent, true and false, engaged and detached, somehow all these, preeminently Dionysian, opposites make up theatre, and also somehow, our relation to the unconscious psyche.

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NOTES

[i] C.f. James Hillman's remarks on the archetypal: 'Rather than pointing at something, "archetypal" points *to* something, and this is *value*. By attaching "archetypal" to an image, we ennoble or empower the image with the widest, richest, and deepest possible significance. "Archetypal", as we use it, is a word of importance (in Whitehead's sense), a word that values.' (Hillman, 1977, p.82)

[ii] Those familiar with the work of Jung will associate the mask with the Persona, which Jung says,

> 'is, as its name implies, only a mask of the collective psyche, a mask that feigns individuality, making others and oneself believe that one is individual, whereas one is simply acting a role through which the collective psyche speaks. When we analyse the persona we strip off the mask, and discover that what seemed to be individual is at bottom collective; in other words, that the persona was only a mask of the collective psyche.' (Jung, 1935, §245)

While Jung takes pains to emphasise that the persona is an essential piece of psychological equipment without which we cannot function in the world, many Jungians draw attention only to the 'negative' aspect of the persona, thus adding their voices to the general modern prejudice which sees the mask primarily as something collective behind which we hide our genuine interior individuality, and indeed this sense of the mask as something that *conceals* has become primary. The modern emphasis on the mask as a false covering reveals much about the fundamental dualism of our approach to the world and the soul. The assumption is that there is a deep divide between interior and exterior, the soul and the body, the superficial and the profound. It is precisely by confusing and refusing these modern dualities, which date from the scientific renaissance, that theatre (with the dream and active imagination) enables us to become reconnected to a psychological, imaginal, approach to the world.

[iii] I am grateful to the dreamer for permission to cite these dreams.

[iv] Interestingly Heisenberg and Bohr applied the same metaphor to the uncertainty principle of quantum physics: 'quantum theory reminds us, as Bohr has put it, of the old wisdom that when searching for harmony in life one must never forget that in the drama of existence we are ourselves both players and spectators.' (Heisenberg, 1962)

[v] It is striking how often words deriving from the Latin *ludere* occur in discussions of theatre: illusion, allusion, collusion, delusion, introducing ideas of play, trickery, magic, suggestion.

[vi] I am aware of the fact that I have talked about both seeing and hearing the image. Talk of 'seeing the image' would seem the more natural, but it is also problematic in that it necessarily differentiates seer and seen; what is seen is obdurate in its object-ness. Perhaps Jung's term 'apperception' would be better, but it feels too technical for ordinary usage. Talk of 'hearing the image' suggests, to me at least, a less active, positive role for the hearer. It also serves the purpose of distancing us from the idea that what we do with, for example, dreams resembles looking at a picture in a book. In theatre, of course, the audience both sees and hears the performance, and itself is heard and sometimes seen by the performers. As I have make clear this reflexive movement of attention

comes much closer to the relation of image and imager than talk of either 'seeing' or 'hearing' can convey.