

WHEN “ONE” BECOMES “TWO” THE VOCATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE MEDIATING OTHER

AN “INTERVIEW” WITH GREG MOGENSEN
BY ROBERT HENDERSON

Greg Mogenson was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. A graduate of The University of Western Ontario, he did his family therapy training at The California Family Study Center and his analyst training through the Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts. A long-time contributor to *Spring Journal*, Greg is the editor of the Studies in Archetypal Psychology Series of Spring Journal Books and a founding member of The International Society for Psychology as the Discipline of Interiority. The author of many articles in the field of analytical psychology, his books include *A Most Accursed Religion: When A Trauma becomes God*, *Greeting the Angels: An Imaginal View of the Mourning Process*, *The Dove in the Consulting Room: Hysteria and the Anima in Bollas and Jung*, *Northern Gnosis: Thor, Baldr, and the Volsungs in the Thought of Freud and Jung*, and (with David L. Miller and Wolfgang Giegerich) *Dialectics and Analytical Psychology: The El Capitan Canyon Seminar*. For more information see the website: www.gregmogenson.com.

Robert S. Henderson is a pastoral psychotherapist in Glastonbury, Connecticut. He and his wife, Janis, a psychotherapist, are co-authors of *Living with Jung: “Interviews” with Jungian Analysts*, Volumes 1, 2 and 3 (Spring Journal Books, 2006, 2008, and 2009). Many of their interviews with Jungian analysts have also been published in *Spring Journal*, *Quadrant*, *Psychological Perspectives*, *Harvest*, and *Jung Journal: Culture and Psyche*.

Robert Henderson (RH): I understand that you were born in Saskatchewan and have roots in the rural life of that Canadian province. What impact do you think that may have had on your later life and career as a Jungian analyst and marriage and family therapist?

Greg Mogenson (GM): Both of my parents grew up on farms in Saskatchewan during the “dirty thirties” of the Depression era. The first in generations to leave the farm and to become educated, I think they felt a debt to the lives and the relatives they left behind. In my father’s case this was especially strong. It was only because his older brother was adamant about not wanting to go to high school (which involved living away from home and boarding in a town some distance away that had a school) that my father, the next oldest, had had the opportunity to go at all. Much to his credit he made the most of this happenstance, finishing high school by sixteen, teaching grades one to ten in a one room school house while obtaining a Bachelor’s degree by correspondence, and then after attending graduate school establishing a very interesting and productive career as a research scientist and high-ranking university academic! Oddly, though, considering the role educational opportunity had played in my parents’ lives (my mother, too, had had a professional career as a nurse), there was little encouragement or expectation that I would be educated. On the contrary, there was bizarrely an attitude of antipathy from my father with regards to this for me even though for my generation higher education had become par for the course. Almost as if in payment of a debt, I spent most of my summers growing up billeted away from home on an uncle’s farm as soon as school let out, and sometimes a month or so before that to help with seeding. Fortunately for me, I loved my uncle, his family, and the large mixed prairie farm. There I had many adventures, both in the actual work of planting crops, summer fallowing, harvesting and caring for the animals, and in the life of the wider community in the late hours carousing with my wild cousins. For most of my childhood right up into my late adolescence I was very much identified with this life, and even wanted to be a farmer. Though this was gradually to give way to my going on to university and graduate school with the aim of becoming a Jungian analyst (I should explain that I had learned something of Jung in high school and that my interest

in him greatly helped me in overcoming my father-complex enough to see university education as a prospect for my own life as well), I continued to work on farms right through into my Master's training which was in family therapy. And even then, after graduating, the rural connection continued through my practicing as a family therapist in a children's mental health center in a rural community in Ontario for ten years. For this work my farming experience was a great asset. I could easily relate to the children and families that I had to treat and could readily couch all that I had to say in the language of the barnyard, a proficiency that is still with me when needed, all these years later in my work as an analyst.

RH: How did you become interested in Jung?

GM: When I was in the tenth or eleventh grade of high school—I think I was sixteen years old at the time—a teacher of world religions gave a lecture on Jung's concept of the archetype and the collective unconscious. Freud, the teacher had explained by way of contrast, saw the psyche reductively and personalistically as being a function of the laying down and lingering on of the vicissitudes of one's childhood and early family experience. Well, by sixteen I had had quite enough of that, or so I liked to think, and for this reason as well was all the more taken with Jung's vision of a transpersonal psyche. There was grandeur in the notion of the archetype, grandeur and transcendence. I loved the idea that I was more than what the external contingencies of "time, place, circumstance, cause and effect" had made me. Though I had not yet read in Jung about the star in man, I had in my puerile exuberance already hitched my wagon to it.

The other path that led me to become interested in Jung I found by way of the novels of Herman Hesse—*Demian*, *Steppenwolf*, *Narcissus and Goldmund*, and the rest. As I recall it now, I was introduced to this author on the same day that I was introduced to Jung. Immediately upon leaving my World Religions class, my head still reeling with the thought of a psyche that is as "fathomless as the abysses of the earth and vast as the sky" (*CW* 11: 758), I walked into the classroom of a favorite teacher and spied a copy of Hesse's *Demian* on his desk. Noticing my interest, and having just finished the novel himself, my teacher generously offered that I might like to borrow it. Later that

day, thumbing through the pages, my eye fastened upon a highlighted section in the Prologue, "But every man is not only himself; he is also the unique, particular, always significant and remarkable point where the phenomena of the world intersect once and for all and never again. That is why every man's story is important, eternal, sacred; and why every man while he lives and fulfils the will of nature is a wonderful creature, deserving the utmost attention." These lines were then followed by another which has haunted me ever since: "In each individual the spirit is made flesh, in each one the whole of creation suffers, in each one a Saviour is crucified." Once again, I felt that same chord struck in me that had been struck earlier that day when I heard about the collective unconscious. Whatever Jung may have meant by that concept (and I certainly intended to find out more about that!), I felt an inward certainty that it had to do with a great truth, whatever its merits as a scientific hypothesis might be. And then there were those marvellous characters from Hesse's novels—Emil Sinclair, Max Demian, and Pistorius; Harry Haller, Hermina, and Pablo; Narcissus and Goldmund; Peter Camenzind. Communing with these troubadours of a questing spirit in the meeting place of my daily reading, a good deal of the atmosphere and ethos of Jungian analysis was imparted to me before I even really knew there was any such thing as Jungian analysis.

RH: In contrast to your experience in meeting Jung through a classroom lecture and through insightful novels, some of the early first generation Jungians we have "interviewed" discovered Jung when they were in the midst of a personal crisis. For example, Jane and Jo Wheelright met Jung while in the midst of a marital crisis. What difference do you feel it makes as to how a person first meets Jung and his psychology?

GM: Maybe the ways of meeting Jung and his psychology which you contrast are not mutually exclusive alternatives, but two sides of the same coin. We know from their own reports that the first generation Jungians who were treated by Jung got a good many lectures from him during the course of their analyses! Joseph Henderson, for example, has described how Jung would pace about in the consulting room pontificating about abstruse topics, on occasion even drawing his attention to material from old books from his library. And we know from the Wheelrights that in the lecture hall of their marital crisis

Jung taught them his ideas concerning typology. As for the other side of the coin, I think that one's being introduced to the depth psychological tradition generally and to Jungian psychology in particular through classroom lectures, books, and insightful novels may also ramify as a crisis through one's self-understanding inasmuch as that one's former, merely personalistic or ego-psychological framework may be radically torn asunder. One learns, to say it with Jung's words, that one is not the master of one's own psychological house. This is a key point. Pushing it a bit I would even go so far as to doubt whether one has really been reached by Jungian thought if one's encounter with it, however this is mediated, has not shaken one up and brought about an inner crisis of sorts.

Now this being shaken up, I should add, has also another important aspect. It indicates that the idea by which you have been struck is not only an external idea, but one that your own soul reverberates with, finds more of itself in, or makes itself with. So there is a vocational aspect to such encounters, vocational in the sense of what is meant when we speak of one's having a calling. Until you are shaken up or brought to crisis you are only superficially in yourself and not really in psychology yet.

I remember in this connection a dream I once had after reading a radical and mind-blowing book. I dreamt that a creek behind my home had spilled over its banks washing my house off its foundations! And there have also been dreams, after having been exposed to various ideas that were new to me, that my office has been trashed by invaders while at the same time, in another moment of the dream, I discover that there is now a new hallway and door leading into my office—a new approach to my practice, in other words.

The upshot of these reflections is that whether one comes to psychology by way of some sort of personal crisis or to crisis by way of psychology, the important thing as far as a specifically Jungian approach in psychology is concerned is that the mediating other—be it the Jung who the first generation Jungians worked with, a symptom, a dream, a lecture, novel or life event—is grappled with as an *internal* other. In one of his books, Jung avers that "We meet ourselves time and again in a thousand disguises on the path of life" (*CW* 16: 534). This statement aptly indicates what is meant when we refer to the figure of the other as the soul's own other, itself as other. Theoretically considered, the

heuristic of our soul-making that Jung provides with this line is nothing else than a lively reiteration of his psychology-constituting insight that for psychology there is no Archimedean vantage-point outside the psyche to view it from objectively. “No Archimedean point” in this context means that nothing is external to the soul. It means that all that presents itself as other is none other than the soul itself, consciousness *per se*, in another of its facets. “All perception is apperception,” as the saying goes. Or as the Chandogya Upanishad has it, “Thou art that.”

A passage of Jung’s beautifully spells out what I am describing here:

When a summit of life is reached, when the bud unfolds and from the lesser the greater emerges, then as Nietzsche says, ‘One becomes Two,’ and the greater figure, which one always was but which remained invisible, appears to the lesser personality with the force of a revelation. He who is truly and hopelessly little will always drag the revelation of the greater down to the level of his littleness, and will never understand that the day of judgement for his littleness has dawned. But the man who is inwardly great will know that the long expected friend of his soul, the immortal one, has now really come, ‘to lead captivity captive,’ that is, to seize hold of him by whom this immortal had always been confined and held prisoner, and to make his life flow into the greater life—a moment of deadliest peril! (*CW*9, i: 217)

Along with the powerful description that Jung provides in this passage of the figure of the other as the soul’s own other, he also emphasizes the challenge character of the encounter. As strange and alien as it may seem, the figure of the other is always and only the mediator of a more comprehensive self-understanding. Or perhaps it is better to say that it already is this self-understanding, albeit in a posited, projected, and often menacingly incisive form. Of course, the more ensconced we are in the definitions we have already assigned to everything or been recruited to the more we will tend to tighten up against this new truth as against some terrible threat. But the challenge, as Jung rightly suggests, is to transcend its seeming externality by realizing that the way it appears is wholly and self-critically a function of one’s own psychological position, identity, or stance. “Who am I,” writes Jung in a somewhat different context (*CW*12: 152), “that all this should happen to me?”

These reflections bring me back to my story about having immediately identified with Jung's concept of the collective unconscious at age sixteen. At that youthful summit of life it was a true and wondrous thing to meet the friend of the soul in that notion. And in hindsight I can say that the transference of that time was such a positive and even idealizing one because the challenge that had been posed fit well with my age and stage. I felt an affinity with Jung and readily understood that to grow up with his help I had only to throw myself into learning more. Never mind that I could only understand a small percentage of what I read of his *Collected Works*. Very gradually an understanding began to take shape and along with this the plan to eventually train as a Jungian analyst myself.

But, of course, there are other junctures of life, other summits. And at some of these the challenge posed by the soul's unfolding has more to do with emancipation via seeing through. In *Treasure Island*, for example, the youthful protagonist Jim Hawkins has to learn that the mentoring friend of his soul who he had met up with in the course of his voyage, Long John Silver, is actually a treacherous pirate! I mention this to say that my identification with and esteem for Jung's concept of the collective unconscious has since that time gone wholly under for me into quite other notions. While I remain a dedicated Jungian, I am a (happily!) disillusioned one. I no longer believe in the collective unconscious. And Jung, too, has been largely stripped of his *mana* for me.

RH: I would guess that for many Jungians the collective unconscious is one of the most important aspects of Jungian psychology. Talk about your no longer believing in it.

GM: Freud once declared the Oedipus-complex to be the shibboleth of psychoanalysis, its avowal serving to distinguish adherents of the movement from its detractors. If the concept of the collective unconscious is in much the same way the shibboleth of analytical psychology, well then I guess I have some explaining to do! For these days I find myself stuttering over that watchword even as in a dream I had a few years back I found myself stuttering the name "Ca-ca-ca-ca-aarl Ju-Ju-Ju-Ju-Ju-ung." I guess you could say that my youthful identification with both Jung and his signature concept have been broken apart through their having become subject to critical reflection.

But before I discuss this any further I want to return to the implicit understanding of the concept which struck me so powerfully and won me over so completely when I first learned of the collective unconscious back in that classroom at age sixteen. Thinking about this now I am put in mind of a passage from one of Emerson's journals that was written a good many decades before Jung came up with his concept of the collective unconscious.

Were you ever instructed by a wise and eloquent man? Remember then, were not the words that made your blood run cold, that brought blood to your cheeks, that made you tremble or delighted you,—did they not sound to you as old as yourself? Was it not truth that you knew before, or did you ever expect to be moved from the pulpit or from man by anything but plain truth? Never. It is God in you that responds to God without, or affirms his own words trembling on the lips of another. (Oct. 27, 1831)

This is a marvellous passage. Expressive of the soul, it serves in our context to bring the similarly expressive aspect of Jung's concept of the collective unconscious to light. This is not to imply, however, as many Jungians would be inclined to assume, that the experience described by Emerson "comes from the collective unconscious." It is much rather the other way around. The concept of the collective unconscious is but a later stanza of Emerson's poetic journal entry (if I may put it that way), a stanza, however, that lapses unpsychologically into the prose of explaining the soul.

The problem I am pointing out has to do with what might be called the expression/explanation difference. The soul and its truths are not such that they could ever be explained from without. On the contrary, like works of art that disclose the inner logic of life events and sometimes even the truth of an Age, they can only be expressed. Jung, as we already discussed, knew about psychology's lack of an Archimedean vantage-point. He knew that everything that is theoretically stated about the psyche is internal to the psyche, a participating expression of its on-going phenomenology. And yet he exempted his concept of the collective unconscious from this critical consideration and presented it as a scientific hypothesis and timeless explain all. Perhaps, however, far from being the explanation of the soul which he intended it to be, Jung's hypothesis of the collective unconscious was itself an expression

of the soul, an expression in the medium of scientific explanation. But even if this is so, and I think that it is, the question arises as to whether such an explanation, however plausible it may seem, is adequate to the expression of the soul that it self-constitutively gives at the same time. And the answer, I believe, is that it is not. Psychology is not explanatory in the manner of science. Explanations proceed from the outside of what they claim to be about. Firmly ensconced in the subject-object distinction, they bring to bear an external mode of reflection. For this reason alone they can never do full justice to the inwardness, autonomy, and creativeness of the soul.

It surprises me just now to find myself critiquing Jung's concept of the collective unconscious for being a reductive interpretation in the sense of its not being up to the truth that it wants to express. But I say this as one who was instructed by Jung as by a wise and eloquent man! What mattered to me at sixteen and since then is that his words resounding in my blood sounded to me as old as myself, to say it with reference to Emerson's phrase. What more proof did I need of "the collective unconscious" than this event of its expressive meaning!

I realize, of course, that this is a very anima-enthused manner of knowing. It is what poets like Keats mean when they speak of something being "proven upon the pulses." Or moving on to psychology, it recalls the muse-like role that hysteria and its symptoms played in inspiring the analytic thought that became psychoanalysis. And this being so we are invited to inquire: wherein does such effusive and symptomatic anima-knowing find its animus-other? Or again: how does that which first announced itself by bringing blood to the cheeks unite with its inherent *logos* to become psych-ology? I have already pointed out that it cannot be by way of external explanation. No, the expressive soul's true other is the animus of immanent criticism.

Now, with this in mind, let us return to the passage of Jung's I cited earlier about the one becoming two such that at the various summits of life one meets the long-expected friend of the soul. If Jung's giving the collective unconscious out as a scientific hypothesis to be proven by means of comparative research led him, as I claim, to fall out of psychology into an external mode of reflection, this text—so similar to Emerson's!—sets us back on the right track again. As a truly psychological notion, the collective

unconscious is not a realm or place existing in addition to or alongside our real world, but merely a more or less adequate expression for those soul-making encounters in which consciousness illuminates its world-situation from within even as it immanently and self-critically grapples with itself as other.

So you see it is the conventional view of the collective unconscious as a psychic substratum or superstructure in us that I am rejecting. I don't think that we can just turn the telescope around and point it at the inner constellations of the soul, as the poem by Coleridge appearing in the front of *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* puts it. For such a maneuver leaves the observing consciousness behind the telescope untrammelled, unscathed. No, it is the concrete universality of those consciousness-seconding figures in whose friendly and sometimes not so friendly light we know and experience the world that matters psychologically. And rather than abstracting these from their contexts and locating them, at the expense of *their* souls (!), in the supposedly trans-historical, trans-cultural depths of *our* collective unconscious, what Jung called the collective unconscious should be thought of in these more phenomenological terms. For there is another side to his wonderful insight about the greater figure which one always implicitly was appearing to one with the force of a revelation. On the heels of paying his tribute to such figures Jung states by way of a warning that "He who is truly and hopelessly little will always drag the revelation of the greater down to the level of his littleness, and will never understand that the day of judgement for his littleness has dawned." Is this not a description of what happens to our sense of soul when the collective unconscious is conceptualized as an existing entity, realm, or power *in us*? The world in miniature in me, the gods residing in the human breast, the archetypes as constants of our human nature, the objective psyche as a matter of personality development—this view I submit, so prevalent in Jungian psychology, amounts to a dragging down of the greater to the level of our own littleness!

Fortunately, however, there is another way of approaching this whole topic. Emerson's reference to the words of a wise and eloquent man sounding to us as old as ourselves does not have to mean that our souls are literally age-old and that as inheritors of a treasury of archetypal images we are born

with silver spoons in our mouths. I see his reference as having more to do with the vocational moment I spoke of earlier. If the words of a wise and eloquent man sound to you as old as yourself it is because the challenge and imperative of your own coming of age is being heard at the same time. And here I should immediately add that one's coming of age is not simply one's own in the sense of being merely personal. Our coming of age is only worthy of being designated as such if at the same time it is the coming of age of consciousness-at-large again and again through us. It is a manner of one's existing and speaking *as universal*, and a nice emblem of this moment is Jung's statement in *Memories* about that point at which, as he put it, "... I ceased to belong to myself alone..." (p. 192).

RH: "The coming of age of conscious-at-large again and again through us." Can you take this idea a little further?

GM: What I am trying to get across here may become a little clearer with the help of an anecdote concerning Jung's reaction to being asked by a correspondent if he believed in life after death. Irked by the question, he answered that his beliefs in such matters had worth only for him alone and that each person must rise to the challenge of finding *his own* answers. It is the same, I submit, with Jung's concept of the collective unconscious. To simply take over this great concept on the basis of Jung's authority and findings is not enough. That only lands us in the Church of Jung, shielded and protected from the soul by an abstract notion of it. But psychology, as Jung rightly said, only exists *extra ecclesiam*, and this is so even in relation to its own institutionalized pieties. Each of us must weigh in with answers of our own to the conundrums of the soul that we face in our life and time.

It is a matter of leaving home! The concept of the collective unconscious in which Jung housed his psychology is the home that we who follow after must set out from to come into our own. This is not to lose sight of the many insights and helpful formulations that we may draw upon from Jung in the course of our own psychologizing efforts. I have already shown something of this with my references to that passage in which Jung talks about meeting the long-awaited friend of the soul and the challenge of letting one's own life flow into that greater life. And in addition to this passage there are many others which are expressive of the same dynamic, albeit in different imagery. Perhaps,

the earliest of these is a little text having to do with the challenge that the soul self-constitutively presents to itself by way of a son's apperception of his father. "For the boy," writes Jung, "the father is an anticipation of his own masculinity, conflicting with his wish to remain infantile" (*CW* 4: 737). Here again we see the two aspects, the progressive unfolding of the one into two via the mediating figure of a greater other and the regressive tendency that would drag the revelation of the greater down to the level of one's incorrigibly self-identical littleness by remaining infantile. Turning to other writings of Jung's we find passages in which this consciousness-critiquing encounter with one's greater other is mediated by the culture-relativizing encounters of one's worldly travels and scholarly reading. In *Memories*, for example, Jung gives an account of how while travelling in North Africa the sight of a majestic horsemen prompted him to subsequently dream that he was in a life and death struggle with a similar figure in the mote of a citadel or casbah, even as in the bible Jacob had to wrestle with the angel at the ford of a river. Of this we can say (by way of another line in which he refers to the alien mentality of the "unexpectedly dark brother" which the European meets on his travels in Arabia and India): "and though I deny it a thousand times, *it is also in me*" (*CW* 18: 1472). And then there is that statement from his "Commentary" to *The Secret of the Golden Flower*: "A growing familiarity with the spirit of the East should be taken merely as a sign that we are beginning to relate to alien elements within ourselves" (*CW* 13:72). Common to all these passages is the aforementioned soul-making encounter in which the one has become two such that from the lesser the greater emerges with the consciousness-critiquing force of a revelation. Or to put it in the terms of our Emerson quote, in each of these passages there is an encounter with a wise and eloquent otherness which, by sounding to us as old as ourselves, calls us to come forward with relevant and more compendious insights of our own.

So, if I reject Jung's concept of the collective unconscious it is because it reifies and externalizes the dialectic of consciousness which it is more deeply about and places a sort of seal of prophecy upon it. But just as Jung stated that "for the boy the father is an anticipation of his own masculinity, conflicting with his wish to remain infantile," so is the collective unconscious an anticipation of our own (by now long-present) future consciousness

within a global world context, conflicting with our regressive wish to remain bound to myth, religion, and God.

RH: In your treatment of Jung's collective unconscious concept you say that it is not up to what it truly means as an expression of the soul. Can *you* weigh in, as you said one must, with an answer of your own to the question of what the concept of the collective unconscious expresses of the soul?

G.M: I see that my remarks thus far have something in common with that old novelty song from the 1920s "Yes! We Have No Bananas"! In a manner similar to that song, it is as if I've been singing, "Yes! We Have No Collective Unconscious"! Pondering this for a moment I think that the "no" in this phrase can be linked up with *negation* in the sense of that term which Giegerich has lately been introducing into analytical psychology. Contrary to Jung and drawing upon Giegerich, I would say that the collective unconscious is *not* a positivity or thing-like entity. Rather, it is an interpretation or theory that gives logically negative expression to the soul even as at the same time it invites the kinds of criticism that I have given above.

But you asked me what Jung's concept of the collective unconscious, if not taken literally in the substantial sense that Jung intended, might mean as a soul-expression. My answer today is a two-fold one. On the one hand, I think it is significant that Jung's psychology of individuation and the collective unconscious appeared at a time in history in which novels of the *Bildungsroman* type were becoming popular. Just a century prior to Jung's birth, Goethe paved the way for this type of novel with his *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* and *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. And the novels of Herman Hesse that I mentioned earlier, appearing alongside Jung's own works, are important for their seeming to actually present Jungian psychology by way of stories concerning the education and coming of age of a young man. My point, however, is not to stress the novelist's debt to the analyst—on the grounds, for example, that Hesse's *Demian* is known to have been based upon his analysis with the Jungian analyst Josef Lang. Rather, it is to suggest that Jung's psychology can itself be claimed as an example of this literary genre. This, let us call it the *Bildungsroman* character of depth psychology, is quite obvious in the diminutive sphere of psychotherapy and analysis. Why, it might even be possible to show that the creation of the role of

“patient” in the analysand sense of that term probably owes a great deal to the unwitting mimesis of Werther, Peter Camenzind, Emil Sinclair, and many more. Or maybe, on second thoughts, it would be better not to derive the one from the other, but to see both the fictional characters created in those novels and the patient role created by psychology as expressions of the culture-critiquing challenge that is posed by the generational difference as it made itself felt at that time. “What you have inherited from your forefathers,” writes Goethe, “grasp it and make it your own.” Is Jung’s concept of the collective unconscious not true to the adage of this wise and eloquent man? But beyond the level of analysis which the individual as patient is the addressee and beneficiary of, I would want to stress that the history of consciousness in a greater, generation and even aeon-spanning sense has also the character of a *Bildungsroman*. Again and again in the course of its history, consciousness itself has been challenged by changes in its world-situation (as by a greater other) to come of age anew. Considered in this light, Jung’s concept of the collective unconscious may be expressive of the soul in this greater sense of its unfolding life through time. Far from transcending time and place by being rooted in a common human substrate of psychic similarity below and in back of these, the concept expressively and creatively speaks from a time and into a time in which the Western mind was meeting its greater other in the mighty figures of world history and trans-cultural geography which had then become subjects for it as never before.

I can now turn to the other aspect of what I think the concept of the collective unconscious reflects as an expression of the soul. Thinking about how this may most succinctly be conveyed, I am put in mind of some imagery from the popular Hollywood movie, *The Bourne Identity*. Based on the best-selling novel by Robert Ludlum, the film begins with the protagonist of the story, played by Matt Damon, having been rescued from the ocean by a fishing trawler. As the rescued man suffers from a condition of total amnesia, the drama begins with his quest to discover who he is. Following up on various clues (such as his ability to speak various languages, and a bank account number sewn into his skin), his search leads him to a safety deposit box in a bank in Zürich—of all places! Opening the box he finds a passport with his picture in it. The enigma of his identity would seem to be solved—except that in the next instant he discovers that it is not, for there are four or five

more passports with his picture in them, each one certifying him as a citizen of a different country and identifying him by a different name! And then he notices, along with the passports, that there are also substantial wads of money in the box, again in various world currencies. Quite an image, this! Without subscribing to Jung's theory of the collective unconscious, we can nevertheless say that it seems to be well-figured in this imagery of multi-national amnesiac world-citizenship. Jung, as we know, saw the collective unconscious as being mediated cross-culturally. As I mentioned earlier, that is what his travels were mainly about. And with regards to how our film's amnesia reference may figure into this mix we have only to connect Jung's having addressed himself to the scholarly equivalent of this condition in his early essay "Cryptomnesia" with his own having been awash in an ocean of erudition and amplification throughout most of his adult life. But, then, here is the thing: far from suggesting that there is a common denominator in us which has expressed itself in various ways in various times and places, the film simply shows the truth of our actual world-situation today. Far-flung places have become immediately accessible, the world a global village. What began with the great sea-faring explorations of earlier centuries has become fully integrated into our consciousness today, the touchstone of this being our modern high-speed travel and telecommunications technology. Now it might well be that in presenting its hero as an amnesiac with multiple passports and various world currencies those responsible for the film were making use of Jung's concept of the collective unconscious, just sort of applying the concept in a Hollywoodizing manner. But I think it is less contrivedly the other way around—that the film may be regarded as bringing out into the open what that concept, for all its inadequacy in other respects, shows with respect to the state of consciousness today. Having long encountered itself in other cultures, consciousness is challenged to push off from the remissive tribalism of its national interests. But of course this is easier said than done and it is everywhere the case that the revelation of the greater has been brought down to the level of our nationalistic littleness. And yet, while this is everywhere the case, we also know that the day of judgement for this littleness has dawned. Indeed, our knowledge of this is so integrated that it can even be represented in a Hollywood film.

Along with those numerous passports and diverse world currencies, the protagonist of our film finds a gun in the Swiss bank box as well. Attacked by various CIA agents who are attempting to assassinate him, he discovers that he has uncanny combat savvy himself. From these and other hints he is finally able to realize that he is a CIA agent whom that organization is intent upon decommissioning by lethal means. Fighting both for his identity and his life, he must pit himself against this agency of American domination, his individuation as it is played out upon the big screen amounting to an immanent critique of the *Pax Americana*.

So much for my film example. I should mention as well that from time to time in my practice I have heard dreams which present what I take to be the same truth. I recall, for example, a dream that was set in *a global village clothing exchange* and another in which there was a tap that issues drinking water which is drawn from all the cities and villages of the world. Dreamers have found themselves in international airports, noticing the names of diverse places and even time periods on the flight gates. And I have also heard dreams of multi-cultural festivals and World Fairs in which pavilions from many nations are depicted. Is this what the passing of the Oedipus-complex looks like today?! Psychology in the Freudian mode knows all about childhood and family life. But what about the psychology of adulthood and of the coming of age of consciousness in our own time? This, it seems to me, has as its *mise-en-scène* the vaster horizons that the film I mentioned and these dreams show.

RH: When I first saw your book, *God Is a Trauma*, I was prepared to hear your view of God. What is your view of God?

GM: I am aware in hindsight that the titles of several of my books may give the impression that God is a big topic for me and that I, perhaps, am a religious person. This, however, is not the case. It is strictly as a psychologist that I have been interested in God and religion. Throughout the vaster part of its history, consciousness has been religious, the soul a function of its gods. It thus behooves us as psychologists to take the history of religions into our purview. But the deaths of the gods and of God have been equally significant events in the spiritual life of mankind. And psychology, it could be said, has arisen in the wake of the religions that preceded it. Expressing this in terms of my

earlier discussion of the one becoming two, we could say that when consciousness was not yet conscious of itself its potential to be so took the form of its gazing and being gazed upon by itself as divine other, as God or the gods. When, however, at a much later date consciousness became more fully aware of itself, its symbolization as God became effete.

The footnote owed to Jung in this connection is to his ideas concerning the death of symbols. In Jung's view, a symbol is alive and necessary only so long as it is an "expression for something that cannot be characterized in any other or better way." When, however, "its meaning has been born out of it," when, that is to say, "that expression is found which formulates the thing sought, expected, or divined even better than the hitherto accepted symbol, then the symbol is dead, i.e., it possesses only a historical significance" (*CW* 6: 816). Now, applying this insight in a more thoroughgoing way than Jung did, I think that it has been constitutive of modern consciousness that those greatest of all symbols, God and the gods, have succumbed to the same process. Jung, of course, worked mightily to avert this process. He attempted to re-voke and re-valorize God as the immanently transcendental God within. He did not see, as I claim, that his insight concerning the death of symbols has provided the starting point for a Jungian analysis *post mortem dei*. But the soul-historical basis of this was right there in the Christianity that he struggled with in forging his psychology. Wholly present in each person of the Trinity, the Christian God is conceived of as having died as a man on the cross, or so the apex of Christian thought avers. And here I am also put in mind of those lines that Jesus spoke at the Last Supper to reassure his disciples just hours before his death:

It is for your own good that I am going
Because unless I go
The Paraclete will not come to you;
But if I do go,
I will send him to you.

John 16:7

In this passage the going under of religious consciousness into its successor form is figured. What Christ refers to as the Paraclete (the advocate, comforter) corresponds to that determination of consciousness that has become conscious of itself, in other words, to consciousness *per se* or psychology as such. Now on the heels of stating this I must hasten to add that by psychology I do not mean the

personalistic psychology that everywhere prevails and which, when it deigns to take on religious topics at all, reduces them to the dynamics of the Oedipus complex, as does Ernest Jones with his grotesquely reductive analysis of the Holy Ghost and Christopher Bollas with his conflation of the Holy Family with the family of the hysteric. These are examples of psychologies that have fallen below the *niveau* of the religious consciousness that preceded them. No, by psychology I mean a psychology that is up to the level of its religious other and which contains its religious precursors within itself as what Giegerich would call sublated moments—psychology in the tradition of C. G. Jung.

You mentioned in the course of posing your last question my early book, *God Is a Trauma*. This book, which was re-issued some sixteen years later in a revised and expanded version under the title, *A Most Accursed Religion: When a Trauma becomes God*, is not a book about God *per se*. Rather, it simply works with metaphors of God along with various other religious tropes as a way of insighting or seeing through what psychology has struggled with under the heading of trauma. Just as God has been described as having “made us in His image after His likeness,” so I suggest do those events that we regard as traumatic due to our difficulty in assimilating them. There are, of course, many passages in the bible that lend credence to this comparison. One of my favorites is Job’s crying out, “Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my bones I shall see God” (Job 19: 26). But whereas Job distinguished himself by remaining pious, our patients may have to take the opposite approach. For, indeed, when it is a matter of being held in thrall by some trauma-god, it may be the more heretic moments of our soul-making that bring healing. This, at any rate, was the view I put across in that book.

A moment ago I said that I am not a religious person, despite what the titles of my books might seem to imply. Likewise, I would now like to add that I have no particular interest—or belief!—in the trauma concept either. To my mind Freud and Jung made the right move in abandoning trauma theory, and the return to trauma in so much of clinical practice today I regard as a disheartening loss of theoretical nerve that has gone hand in hand with a regression into unpsychological modes of thought. Consciousness (and this is a point I made even as early as *God Is a Trauma*) is *self-traumatizing*. Its incisive action of self-critically cutting into itself at those junctures at which it already knows

more than it is ready to admit and take responsibility for is mediated from without by all manner of arrows and slings, untoward events and happenings. And here again I would point out the dialectic of the one becoming two. Existing as both subject and (subjectively apperceived) object, the inwardness or consciousness of our world-relation is perpetually challenged with having to realize that the apparently impinging, external other which it has pictured itself as being menaced by is not really as external as it had at first maintained.

RH.: I bet there are people who read this "enterview" who will find it very intellectual, academic, and difficult to understand. And they might wonder why doesn't Greg write in such a way that we can understand what he is saying. What would you say to such people?

GM.: The challenge of such a question, when one is functioning as an analyst, teacher, lecturer, or author, is to not be seduced into identifying with what the questioner is resistantly trying to foist off from him or herself onto you. Freud said that in his practice he always worked so as not to take on the roles he was being recruited to by his patients, but to stay with the sober work of psychology. This, it seems to me, is good advice. Even though it may work out that we have to wear what is put onto us for a while before this can come home to the patient as their own, the point about not colluding with this process, but standing ready to analyze it, is well taken. Now with this in mind, I would try to reply to the kind of question that you mention in such a way that the tension in it between the wish for a simplistic psychology, on the one hand, and the fended-off insight that psychology is a complex and challenging business, on the other, is borne intra-psychically by the person asking it and not allowed to remain distributed interpersonally between us.

It all comes down to what I said before about all perception being apperception. Though my questioner is not completely making me up or misperceiving me (for, obviously, I do make a lot of effort with respect to the intellectual clarification of the topics I discuss), I nevertheless believe with Jung that he is also meeting himself in me. So it is an important moment. Unbeknownst to himself my hapless interrogator may be setting himself up to reap more than he bargained for. For packed into his question a subtle version of the classic flight-from-a-pursuer dream may be playing itself out. Clinging to ideological commitments

and familiar selves, it is regularly the case that people run away from new insights. In our dreams, this can be a very frantic action, as if we are running for our very lives. At the end of a lecture, however, this same dialectic can seem very lazy and laid back. He who very possibly will be running away from himself in a nightmare only a few hours from now saunters up to the speaker and asks him why he makes it all sound so difficult, why doesn't he express himself more simply so that others can understand. But I think that when such a question is asked the innocence of the person posing it has already been wounded by his having gotten more from the lecture or article than he wants to let himself in for. He got it in his soul and with his question is only mounting an ego-psychological defense. But like all such defenses, even when they seem to work for a time, this one comes too late. The unwanted insight has been thought, the comfort of the Jungian pew ruined forever, the quest for a truer conception already begun (even if, as is so often the case, this beginning has the form of one's running the "wrong" way at first).

But I continue to talk like a book and have not yet told you what I would say if such a question were put to me! Well, here is how I imagine one possible response. Tilting my head back and fixing my questioner with a look which already conveys that while I appreciate his clever con-game, I am not falling for it, I would chide him with a smile,

"So you want psychology to be easy, eh?! Want me to say it all more simply, maybe even to do your homework for you, to boot?! Nice try!"

Following upon this, I would then probably try to find out something about him, and drawing upon this information, direct him to some even weightier books and writers. Or, if I really took a liking to him—let's say this was at a wine and cheese party at the conclusion of a lecture—I'd probably use the challenge posed by his supposed ignorance as a foil and passionately launch into a two or three minute crash course on the topic of my talk, with the likely outcome (I say "likely," here, because this has again and again been my actual experience!) that my new friend would be drawn along with me as I relish for myself the edifying boon of having just now come up with analogies and distinctions I'd never thought of before.

RH: Wonderful response. I would like to end our time with one last question, Greg. I appreciate your thoughtfulness and time in doing this "interview." You have been generous with your responses and I thank you.

A lot of the world often wants "quick," "simple," and "positive." Whether it be the positive psychology movement, the seemingly quick cures that medication offers, the fundamentalist movement, or the appeal of short-term therapy, many in the world today are adverse to a healing process that takes time and hard work. Some have wondered if depth psychology (like Jungian psychology) will fade from the scene soon. How do you react to this?

GM: An adage comes to mind. I think it was first uttered in a more formal version many years ago by the British psychoanalyst, Masud Khan. He said that it is not so hard to cure a neurosis; it's hard to cure a cure. This, I believe, is an important insight. Again and again in our practices we meet patients for whom the crux of the treatment has to do with their coming to see that the problems they complain of are hand-in-glove with some phoney self-cure which they defensively indulge in, cling to, or collude with. Why, just the other day the discussion I had with a young man about his particular version of this ruse led to his having to make the still somewhat testy confession that he'd rather live the perfect lie than the imperfect truth!

But let us leave our patients out of it for the moment. Khan's idea about the difficulty of curing a cure has also another addressee: Psychology itself. In the "highly competitive market-place" that we live in today, psychology is big business. From pop-psychology to life-style magazines, the counselling hour to the analyst's armchair and couch, it has learned to cater to such needs as the patient I just mentioned admitted to. Or perhaps it would be truer to say that it is not a matter of merely catering to such needs, but of having invented them in the first place! I refer to the fact that like everything else in our epoch, psychology has become a commodity, its patients consumers. In your question just now you mentioned some of its featured products—short-term therapy, medication for everyone, fundamentalism, and the positive psychology craze. While concurring with you about this list, I would not see Jungian analysis and other long-term depth psychologies as being essentially any different, for are they not just high-end boutiques in which such

ritzy cures as “wholeness,” “individuation,” “the feminine,” “personal growth,” or some new-age God may be purchased? What an embarrassment of riches psychotherapy has become!

So, again, let’s leave aside the too easy focus upon the patient. It is the physician—Psychology—that must heal itself. But what *in its case* does it mean to cure a cure?

I can only hint at this with the help of a few lines from Jung. The first of these suggests the self-critical application of the talking cure to itself. “We should never forget,” writes Jung, leaving the psycho-babble of the analyst and his patients behind, “that in any psychological discussion we are not saying anything *about* the psyche, but that the psyche is always speaking about *itself*” (*CW* 9, i : 483). Read in relation to the present context, I take this to mean that in any truly psychological discussion, as in any truly transformative therapy, the concepts of the cure, far from being routinely applied, are themselves subject to the treatment, subject to themselves, as I shall explain a little more about in a moment.

The second line that I want to quote has to do with the problem of the transference, but here again the emphasis is not on the patient and analyst *per se*, but on “the third of the two,” as it has been called, psychology and its concepts, the soul and its truths: “Psychological induction,” writes Jung, “inevitably causes the two parties to get involved in the transformation of the third and to be themselves transformed in the process” (*CW* 16: 399). This is a most important recognition. That the “two parties get involved in the transformation of the third” and only then, through this effort, are themselves transformed, suggests that it is “psychology” or “the soul” that is in treatment through us.

What I am getting at here is more readily understood by means of an analogy to the judicial system. In a court of law, the process of discernment is not totally focussed upon applying established laws to those who are charged with having contravened them in some way. While this, to be sure, is its workaday concern, the Law itself, the very notion of Justice, is also on trial. I refer here to the existing prospect that any case, even the most petty from a human point of view, may lead justice to new distinctions and insights, to redefine itself through new precedents even. And so it is, or at least potentially may be, with psychology. Just as the law places its notion, “Justice,” again and again

before the bar of its own self-redefining judgement, so, too, must psychology place its notion of itself, its notion, "the soul," again and again into its own scales.

So to return to your question, it is not the difference between short-term counselling and long-term analysis that concerns me (both of which may be equally shallow or deep), but of the difference—referred to by Giegerich as "the psychological difference"—between the psychology that people *have* and can talk *about*, and the recursive, new precedent-setting conversation of the soul with itself. Now with this distinction in mind we may return to the two who, perhaps unbeknownst to themselves, are "involved in the transformation of the third," that is, of psychology itself. I am not suggesting that the patient and therapist should indulge in meta-psychological discussions, or that the word "soul" should be bandied about. Rather, in a most down-to-earth manner, and as if time and again from scratch, it is through the most compelling issue of each session that "the third" is engaged and transformed. In one hour or one case, the marriage concept may be the face of "the third" that is being grappled with; in other hours or cases it may be any of a host of others such as, "Honesty," "Devotion," "Responsibility" or what have you. Of course, these are usually brought at first in the form of empirical realities, as the wife, the kids, the boss, and little old me. And it may take some time for the realization to dawn that it is actually the universals that these particulars concretely exemplify that are "the third" that the work is about. And here I am reminded of the insight that led Jung to overcome his childhood neurosis. Overhearing his father's worry that he might be incurable and unable to earn his own living, the fainting and indolent boy suddenly realized, "Why, then, I must get to work!" (*Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, 31) And so it is each day in our practices. The young father who has lagged behind his having become a father goes under and across into the concept-expanding and perhaps even new precedent-setting recognition, "Oh, so *that* is what it means to be a father!" Likewise, the jaded playboy, rattled by having been impotent with the woman who has for the first time in his life really quickened his love, comes to realize, "Oh, so that is what "Love" is, what a "Girlfriend," a "Fiancé," and a "Wife" are. And now he simply has to be different. No need for a string tied around the finger reminding him to implement a behavioral strategy drawn from some rule-

book of appropriate living. He now *is* fiancé and husband even, his symptoms and struggles having resulted in a freshly acquired and possibly transformed *conception* of what these soul-truths are.

But here now, on the heels of presenting these examples of what I like to call "Notional Practice," I am prompted to take this characterization of psychotherapy a whole lot further by mentioning those moments in which the interpretative rapport of the two is fully up to "the dispassionate gaze of the soul." All at once, "in the twinkling of an eye," the ordinary figures and topics of the life-world that I just mentioned may be released from being merely what they are literally about to the ego and appear in a wholly different light on the mind's stage as the *dramatise personae* through which consciousness or "the soul" is staging, producing, and enacting a completely new conception of its truth. Interpretatively speaking, such insight is a matter of our making that same move from *Vorstellung* (picture-thinking) to the notion when hearing the imbroglios of our patient's social lives, the melodramas of their object relations, or a dream that Hegel made when he moved from the imagery of religious faith to its philosophic comprehension.

But you wanted to know my reaction to its seeming to some that depth psychology will fade from the scene soon. In my opinion, this has already happened, already long ago, but as the opposite of itself, i.e., in what Philip Rieff, already in 1966, called "the triumph of the therapeutic." In my remarks about this above I touched upon the topic of this demise in terms of the commercialization of psychology, its big business and commodity fetish character. Borrowing a figure from Hegel this same problematic could also be discussed under the heading of "the positivity of psychology." It is a fatal situation, *fatal but not grave*. Depth psychology, as I illustrated earlier with my references to the death of Christ and the sending of the Paraclete, began with the going under of the religious consciousness that preceded it. In something of the same spirit, it must now tarry with its own demise, going under and across into that concept of the cure that is making itself anew through our lives, and loves, and times. It is a matter of our facing what the cure has become in our day, and of being humbled by how facile and phoney it has in so many ways become. True, as the decades pass a certain adroitness may be achieved. The therapist becomes an old hand. Psychology, however, should never become so

old hat for him that a patient or the wind could not knock it from his head at any moment. And here again, with this mention of the two whose work, as Jung rightly said, most deeply "involves the transformation of the third," I am again put in mind of those lines from Hesse that I cited at the outset, "... every man is not only himself; he is also the unique, particular, always significant and remarkable point where the phenomena of the world intersect once and for all and never again. That is why every man's story is important, eternal, sacred; and why every man while he lives and fulfils the will of nature is a wonderful creature, deserving the utmost attention. In each individual the spirit is made flesh, in each one the whole of creation suffers, in each one a Saviour is crucified."

