

Introduction:

In the spirit of “cutting to the chase” I will start by renaming the advertised title of my presentation “Play Theory and Psychoanalytic Group Work” to “Archetypal Groups.” To help pace myself I have divided my presentation into six three minute sections.

Archetypal Groups

Section I: I Ching

Completing my three year hiatus from active participation after analytic training, I am of the mind to “cut to the chase” by extending myself into a new relationship with the Interregional Society of Jungian Analysts. My hope is that this courtship will be one of mutual attraction and bring success. That a “stillness within” can be embraced while experiencing an “arousing thunder” without. I want to introduce you to my archetypal group, how they work dynamically and theoretically and

explore with you the absence of Jungian group work in clinical settings and in analytic training.

Section II: Andrew Samuels

“A Stillness Within”

I am aware of Jung’s ambivalence to group psychotherapy and want to quietly and respectfully acknowledge that ambivalence. Under “group work” in his Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis, Andrew Samuels quotes Jung, from CW8 par. 228.

Quote: “For while the group may give a person a courage, a bearing and a dignity which may easily get lost in isolation, there is a danger that the benefits of group life will prove so seductively inhibiting that the individual is lost.”

“The Arousing Thunder”

I am also mindful of the “arousing thunder” inherent in group work that constellates shock and terror as the group seizes authoritative rule in the encounter with the numinous. The movement is violent and sexual causing terror.

Section III: Eric Neumann (**pronunciation**) – The Psychology of Ritual

Where Samuels and Jung are timid and ambivalent about group work, Neumann’s work on primitive group ritual articulates the successful archetypal antecedent of the failed Bush strategy of “shock and awe”. Neumann’s understanding of the archetypal action of a group seen analytically is not a threat or a seduction to individuation but rather its origin and ground.

Quote: “When the basic and true world of numinous power is activated through group ritual, the transpersonal psychic level of man is set in motion. Every human

life is embedded in the world of archetypal dominants which determine human existence.” P.11

“In the course of man’s development, the role of the individual becomes increasingly clear. As a dialectic process the group and the creative individual proceeds. The group ritual becomes supplemented and replaced by rituals established by the individual.” P. 20

Section IV

Ritual play creates a space that is safely guarded by rules allowing teamwork and the conjuring of archetypal energy. Group work is formed by play which is related to psychic energy. Family relatives are manifest content immediately constellated in group work. To work analytically with this material is to follow the trajectory of CW 5: Symbols of Transformation. Our mandate whether working individually or with groups, is to move the Oedipal conflict out of the literal incest energy into the deeper experience of the depth feminine – Mother – and make consciousness

accommodate the unconscious process. With groups, because of the immutable family projections, and because of the psychic energy that naturally emerges on the “playing field”, the path to the archetypal is laid bare, exposed to every member.

Section V: Theoretical Prescriptions – (Seminar Format – Group Format)

Seminar Format:

In 1913 Jung was deeply shaken by the rupture of his relationship with Freud.

Thirteen years later he was on firm ground with a theoretical platform with no

formal program to explicate his psychological theories. Jung no longer had as

much time to give to each analysand and he began searching for something

analysands could do (independently) to intensify and expand their analytic range.

In the Visions Seminars (through active imagination) Jung was able to **Quote:**

“parallel his own self-analysis and quest for self-knowledge with that of the gifted visions of Christiana Morgan. Morgan’s visions brought life and fiery imagery to his intellectual theories.” Visions, intro xi

Group Format:

I first ventured into analytic group processing after a year long training in group psychodynamics. I was looking for something my analysands could do to expand their individuation process. Similar to Jung’s Visions Seminar I found Jungian Archetypal Groups brought life and fiery energy to the individuation process of the group members. Instead of Christiana’s visions I used the group member’s psychological text and dreams as the “prima materia”. Unexpectedly I experienced

in group work what I had theorized in my thesis *Death, Denial and the NFL* and on my website, *Facemask* – that being the overlapping of cultural psyche with the individual psyche.

Theoretical Prescriptions: - (Jung's Later Works)

In Spirit and Life Jung states there is a need to move beyond the ego in individuation. His 1928 essay Unconscious and Education Jung starts to discuss the “Feminine,” as a dynamic, rather than Anima as a structure. The post mid-life years are focused on a disciplined ego that deals with the feminine. In Two Kinds

of Thinking the unconscious is an autonomous being. She thinks in non-rational modes and is sexual. Jung wants to get the 'ego' back into psyche. The ego is masculine (for men and women) and psyche is sexual...the unconscious feminine is genius. It tells what is going to happen next. The feminine does not tell us what to do. One needs a strong ego to do Jungian work.

Late Jung is a refinement of his early theories. Jung is going somewhere. Jung's transgression with Freud was seeing the unconscious as self-generating independent of the ego. At this time Jung had been structuring "his" unconscious as content (anima, animus, shadow). He is now more acclimated to psyche and does not need the anima as a structure. The anima is not in motion. It doesn't go

anywhere. He now begins to shift his understanding of the unconscious feminine as dynamic, ebb and flow. (This dynamic understanding of the feminine is essential in group rituals which are defined by action and utterance) The domain of the feminine is not a repository of the unconscious. The movement of consciousness outside the ego seen by Jung was accompanied by Jung's seeing the dynamic movement within psyche herself. In MDR he refers to ego and non-ego as Personality Number 1 and 2. Jung kills off the ego father through non linear intuitive thinking and moves closer to Mother. For Jung, Mother is a PICTURE OF EXPERIENCE, not a literal thing. Mother is now intuitive thinking and is in the TRANSFERENCE (or perhaps is the transference?) From this point on for Jung and archetypal groups the mandate is to connect to the feminine psyche P2 and follow her return to consciousness bringing the darkness of the rejected feminine to light.

Section VI: Clinical Material – “Pictures of Experience”

At the beginning of the year I added three new members to the existing group of five. All members have worked with me individually for over a year, some for as long as ten years. In the individual sessions the afore mentioned Theoretical Prescriptions structured their analysis emphasizing the importance of gaining

consciousness of psyche (P2). Despite my efforts to organize the integration of old and new members in the first week of January – a blatant ego/anal P1 effort on my part, scheduling problems and illness stretched the introduction into February. In that period I was moved off of my agenda and delightfully encountered the dynamics of trust and distrust, of the two new women sparring with the ‘dominant’ matron and all the men being surprisingly passive. The picture of experience that came to me as the group leader was of an orchestra conductor moving from leading the “strings section” of the women to trying to bring up the “horns” in the men’s section.

My conducting experience was interrupted when a new male member of the group was introducing himself and mentioned his individual analysis was helped greatly by his taking detailed notes after each session. Instantaneously a woman turned in her chair and asked if he intended to take notes of the group. It was not a question.!

The man blanched and apologized. In that quick exchange my picture of experience changed to that of an offensive line coach instructing players on the vicissitudes trap blocking. Trap blocking seen analytically involves misdirection and legal blindsiding. Breaking down the play in the group I saw that the ladies had not totally resolved their Oedipal turf war. Certainly an Oedipal lens (P1) could be applied to the sibling women in the group/family given the aggressive, projected misdirection block to the unsuspecting male rather than to the dominant

group female. And yet there was another level of chilling venom that sliced in to the note taker. There was no trace of a relational interval between the two members. The woman's comments were cold, penetrating and precise. I have interpreted this type of group exchange as "analytic incest" i.e. an archetypal force being spoken of by someone as if it were an ego related statement.

It is not a consciously P2 intervention assessing the presence of the feminine psyche. The impact was instantaneous and severing. The men paled and withdrew in fear. The picture of experience that emerged from my notes of this group session was that of analytic incest and castration. Nietzsche's screeching and whoring "unknown god" in Jung's essay Wotan came to mind.

Section: IV: Clinical Material – "The Shock Aroused in Clinical Material"

I was unsure about bringing my picture of experience to the next group session. On the one hand the image was a composite picture, an interpretation of material from several individual group members. On the other hand it was an intuitive image of psyche. In time I became more comfortable with my intuitive associations. I sensed I was moving into the dynamics Jung described in Dream Seminars – where the

dreamer was not the focus as Christiana was not the focus of the Vision Seminars. Jung was speaking to Western Culture without Freud. Could the group have constellated a picture of incest and castration that spoke to and described Western Culture in our time? Could the group not only have opened itself to three new members at the beginning of the year but through its picture of experience opened itself to be a group of and for psyche – the transformative depth feminine?

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Clinical Material: “Arousing Thunder”

The shock aroused in clinical material comes from the manifestation of the “depth feminine” in individual group members. This fear of the feminine is good. When one has assimilated and learned in their hearts what fear and trembling mean – one is safe guarded from any terror.

It is imposed first upon the group leader and then spread through out the group, that one remains composed and reverent in the face of the arousing thunder of psyche. A profound inner seriousness needs to be kept to ensure the sacrificial spoon and chalice that holds psyche does not fall. The sacrificial rite must not be interrupted.

I Ching

Thank you for this time.