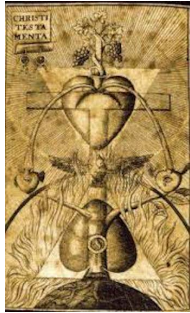


HAMLET'S ERROR



The rising of unknown contents from the depths of psyche such that lives are changed irreversibly, is a recurring motif shared by Jung's psychology of the unconscious and Shakespeare's dramatic works. Invariably shadow material takes possession, a loss of soul follows, when patience and long, painstaking work is required to find and recover what has been lost. This motif plays out repeatedly through Shakespeare's plays, particularly the late Romances, developments that signal an evolving psyche, where lost soul *is* recovered, a resolution that didn't happen in the earlier period. For both these men, the process of healing requires a descent leading to an encounter and acceptance of all aspects of one's being. While this challenge was demanded in Shakespeare's earlier period the obstacles proved insurmountable, and the inner division remained unresolved.

This pattern of volcanic uprising is poignantly illustrated in a scene with Cordelia, her two sisters and her father in the opening scene of *King Lear*. Lear has requested that his three daughters publicly proclaim their love for him. In a gathering of the court, Lear puts the question, "which of you three doth love us most." His first two daughters provide fulsome and well-rehearsed replies. However, when it comes to Cordelia, who Lear describes as "our joy", then adds, "what can you say to draw a third more opulent than your sisters," she answers, "nothing my Lord". Despite her father's growing impatience, she stands by her answer a second time and threatened by her father she holds for a third, at which point the enraged king disinherits his "most loved daughter" and banishes her to France, an action which recalls Persephone's kidnapping by Hades and her descent to the underworld.

King Lear is the ninth play from Shakespeare's middle period which began with *Hamlet*, first performed in 1600. It is often thought that in writing *Hamlet*, Shakespeare's recent biography looms in the background, his son Hamnet having died of the plague, aged eleven, four years earlier. It's unlikely that Shakespeare attended his son's funeral, and this highlights the sense that Shakespeare was largely an absent father, his son in Stratford, while the actor manager father forged a theatre career on London's South Bank. A reservoir of grief, and a father's guilt, is key to understanding *Hamlet*, a feeling that resonates through the final twelve years of Shakespeare's career when he would write sixteen plays. Lear's words, "I have ta'en too little care of this" acknowledge a father's guilt arising from an extraverted pursuit where family responsibilities are neglected. Beyond the personal grief of the lost connection between a father and his son, there is the anxiety of an age in the background, where the authority of a benevolent, heavenly father has diminished within the feverish tension of the Reformation, and connection to the once-sanctifying authority of the Pope has been severed. Queen Elizabeth is an aging monarch without an heir, and her nephew James, whose mother, on the instruction of Elizabeth, was beheaded for treason, for allegedly plotting against her cousin Elizabeth, while James' book *Demonology* published a decade earlier, reflected a prevailing fear of witchcraft and possession. The

infrastructure of religion was changing, where man must more and more bear the questions of life and death without the previous certainties of the faith that had assured and psychologically contained him. It's relevant that the name of the hero, 'hamlet', also refers to a small village without a church. Hamlet's opening soliloquy laments, "O that this too too solid flesh would melt thaw and resolve itself into a dew, or that the everlasting had not fixed his canon 'gainst self-slaughter." There are three different versions of this opening line, where the words 'sallied' and 'sullied' stand in place of 'solid', suggesting that Shakespeare pondered how best to describe Hamlet's struggle, his aversion to earth, flesh, and mortality, a feeling reflected in the abundance of putrefactio imagery peppered through the play: 'serpent', 'salt', 'poison', 'prison', 'worm,' and of course Hamlet's words, "there is something rotten in the state of Denmark". Hamlet anticipates Lear's cry, alone on a stormy heath, "Who is it that can tell me who I am?", perhaps the outstanding Shakespearean image of existential man, uttered long before the 20th century when the term was coined.

To that question, "Who is it that can tell me who I am?", the Fool answers, "Lear's shadow". It is an image that weaves the essential strands that generate the king's transformation. On the one hand 'shadow' refers to Lear being reduced to a shadow of his former self. A powerful ruler has been disarmed and exposed as impotent and brimming with malign impulses. His narcissistic parenting and violent nature, previously hidden in the shadows of his regal persona, have been exposed. It is that very shadow that is mirrored back through his daughters' cruel treatment, who shut their father out of doors. Unsheltered on the stormy heath the king is exposed to the elements and through confrontation with the raw side of nature he is brought face to face with his own malevolence. Bearing and incubating that shadow is the suffering that, over time, actuates the king's rebirth.

Shadow is a signature concept in Jungian psychology. It refers to the person we do not want to be but secretly feel we are, where the undesirable aspects are concealed behind the persona, the mask we present to the world. Critical to Jung's thinking is that shadow acceptance is essential to an authentic rounded personality. According to the alchemical myth of the sun's reliance on the moon, the sun cannot shine without the presence of the moon. Moreover, a confrontation and acceptance of the shadow *activates* the healing function. The alchemists imagined that with the right process poison was transformed into a substance that cured, an operation questionable in physical medicine but one that bears fruit in psychological work. It is the poison that cures say the alchemists.

It's Edgar who, while not Lear's biological son, is his spiritual heir. The rebirth arising through the king's long suffering, is accompanied by a reawakening of the capacity to feel. Edgar voices the words that reveal the true nature of kingship. "A most poor man, made tame to Fortune's blows/Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows/Am pregnant to good pity./Give me your hand." The hand that Edgar takes is that of his blind father, his eyes put out by those he mistook as loyal and trustworthy. The blinding was the price paid, symbolically speaking, for his naïve blindness to the shadow side of life. Paradoxically, it's at that moment of witnessing his father's blind incapacity, that the son's eyes were opened, and it is through the full acceptance of the reality of shadow that Edgar's initiation into authentic masculinity happened.

WHO'S THERE

In Hamlet, the rising from the depths is personified in the form of the ghost of Hamlet's father. The clock strikes midnight as the curtain rises to a dead silence, until Bernardo's voice cries from the dark:

"Who's there?"

Francisco's nervous reply follows:

"Nay answer me. Stand and unfold yourself."

"Long live the king"

replies Barnardo there to relieve Francisco of his night watch.

"For this relief much thanks," says Francisco. 'Tis bitter cold/And I am sick at heart."

In five lines the main themes of the play have been tabled: the night and the unseen, hidden side of nature; the irony of "long live the king", as the king is dead and it's the usurping king's nature, 'unseen' and hidden that has killed the ruling monarch; the 'bitter cold', suggesting the realm of Saturn, the dark planet, furthest from the sun where the psycho-alchemical process begins, when frozen, hidden feelings heat up and thrust themselves into consciousness; and the "sickness of heart", a manifestation of the pain that arises in the heart of the psyche when feelings and the shadow aspect are hidden. Hamlet will soon soliloquize and lament "the heartache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to". The word 'heart' is found thirty-six times in the play and marks, according to the OED, the first appearance of the word 'heartache' in the English language.

The attendance of Horatio and Marcellus is expected:

"I think I hear them", says Francisco. Stand ho! Who's there?

"Friends to this ground", replies Horatio.

"And liegeman to the Dane", says Marcellus

Francisco exits, leaving Barnardo as the lone sentinel:

"Holla, Barnardo", says Marcellus, and again, we hear a voice in the dark.

Barnardo replies:

"Say, what, is Horatio there?"

"A piece of him", replies Horatio.

Now we've heard Horatio's voice already, we know he approaches – so why the need for reassurance, why is the vocal tone not enough?

Horatio emerges and says,

"What, has this thing appeared again tonight?"

"I have seen nothing", says Barnardo

Marcellus adds:

Horatio says "tis but our fantasy/And will not let belief take hold of him/Touching this dreaded sight twice seen of us."

"Tush, tush, it will not appear."

Twelve lines later, the ghost *will* appear for the third time. It follows three anxious calls: "Who's there?", "Stand and unfold yourself", "Is Horatio there?" even though we know he is, we've heard his voice.

In referring to the ghost as 'this thing', the sense that an unknown force is wielding itself into the Danish court is raised.¹ 'Thing' in the old Norse means 'an assembly, a court or parliament'. So, this 'thing', the father's ghost, is being inferred as the ruling principle, an unknown factor arising from the autonomous psyche is insisting itself into consciousness and crying out to be seen. It is notable that Horatio, the voice of reason in the play, doubts the existence of the ghost. Later Hamlet will rebuke Horatio, "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy, good Horatio."

Earlier Horatio has self-identified as a 'piece of him', as if to acknowledge that something of himself is missing. Both Hamlet and Horatio have come 'down' from Wittenberg, the intellectual centre of Europe of the time, where reason and a rational approach to belief was dominant. Hamlet will later rebuke his uncle saying, "I am too much in the sun". While Hamlet is unaware at this stage of the extent of his uncle's duplicity, Hamlet seems to say that the light of the ruling principle, meaning both the king's dominance and the authority of reason, blinds him to the shadow side of life. With the appearance of the ghost other psychic influences that extend beyond the rational are demanding attention.

ONE, TWO, THREE, WHERE IS THE FOURTH

The number three is significant: "three" dominates the chthonic cults of antiquity, and signals we are in the realm of the underworld. Cordelia's three 'nothings', Edmund's "base, base, bastardy base", Florizel's denial of his father three times, the three witches in Macbeth, with their thrice times three incantations. Jung and Von Franz often quoted a passage from the Timaeus, where Socrates entering a room says: "One, two, three, where is the fourth?" Others who worked with Von Franz report that she would say, "One, two, three, go!" And when she said it, she meant, risk, and open yourself to the unknown.

MacBeth was an honorable warrior, loyal to the king. Following victory in battle, MacBeth proclaimed a great hero, he encounters three witches. These witches are not fate controllers. Rather, they see into the human heart, spot the shadow of hidden desire, and only a gentle nudge of MacBeth's unconscious power complex was required, with the words, "Thou shalt be king", for the unlive life of the hero to possess him with an irresistible compulsion to murder the king and claim the throne.

Jung's definition of god is apt here:

"To this day God is the name by which I designate all things which cross my willful path violently and recklessly, all things which upset my subjective views, plans and intentions and change the course of my life for better or worse."

TENSION of OPPOSITES

In the play Measure for Measure, the Duke has abdicated for one year and entrusted Angelo to watch over the city of Venice during the Duke's absence. Following his departure, Angelo invokes a new law, making fornication a crime punishable by death. Isabella, a nun, has a brother Claudio whose fiancé is pregnant with child, and Claudio has been sentenced to death for this offence. Isabella visits Angelo to plead for clemency. During that meeting Angelo is overtaken by intense desire for Isabella.

Following her departure, Angelo acknowledges this saying,

What's this? What's this? Is this her fault or mine?

The tempter or the tempted, who sins most?/Not she: nor doth she tempt: but it is

¹ a psychic event which parallels the imminent invasion of the foreign Norwegian army, an act which avenges the previous incursion of Hamlet's father.

I/That, lying by the violet in the sun,/Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,/Corrupt with virtuous season.../Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary/And pitch our evils there/O, fie, fie, fie!/What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?

This battleground of opposing forces, a tension of opposites, is played out through Shakespeare's work, where a 'yes' and a 'no' have it out. Here Angelo, aware of what he mustn't do collides with his irresistible attraction to Isabella. This is typical of the Shakespearean soliloquy, where characters are conscious of the complex they are caught in and have it out, where a dialogue between the opposite positions is raised up and held in a heightened tension. The audience occupy an objective standpoint, in that they stand back and witness a man struggling with his inner division. In fact, the duke hasn't left Venice. He remains incognito, disguised as a friar, where he too stands as a witness to Angelo's lower nature. While none of the onstage characters know of the duke's presence, we, the audience, are party to the secret.

We might wonder whether the duke has knowingly put Angelo in this position of great temptation because he, the Duke, must witness what is split off in himself, and that he too is implicated, unconscious of his hidden desire, and must through the course of the drama witness what has been neglected. The theatre is where we sit and see ourselves acted where, in Jung's words, 'the complexes... and the scenery of the unconscious are staged' (Jung 1984, p 55) We the audience watch the Duke watching, and through this act of witness we too might face the contradictions in our inner world.

Jung says that such inner conflict is an essential aspect of psychological development, an 'inner division' which heralds a 'positive step forward in consciousness' (Jung 1972, §758). The constellation of opposites is a precondition of consciousness, he says. Unity, in order to know itself must divide within itself, separating from itself in order that each side might know its opposite. "Without duality, Boehme argues, there can be no self-revelation (BSS 7: 3.22e), and what else is consciousness, Shelling adds, but the self's revelation of itself to itself. The one divides so that it might be revealed to itself, and thereby love itself, that is, so that love might be." (McGrath, p11)



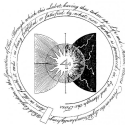
It is notable that Shakespeare doesn't take sides and allows the conflicted opposites to constellate with each side given equal value, where what is hidden and unconscious must manifest in order that the totality of the self is realized. With Angelo, his compulsion is intense and irresistible, and the restraining element eventually gives way to desire, when he invites Isabella back and strikes a devilish bargain: he will offer clemency to her brother on condition that she lie with him.

An extraordinary motif, where the monarch, the ruling principle, is unconscious of itself. This recalls Jung's distinction between consciousness that is conscious and consciousness that is unconscious. Here the audience occupies the position of consciousness, both seeing what is unknown in the characters and witnessing the process whereby the unconscious makes itself known to consciousness.

DUALITY

Jacob Boehme, a 17th-century German mystic and theologian, formulated the tension of opposites as a duality between the fire of wrath and the fire of love, opposites, he argues, which are rooted in God's nature. Jung's deep affinity with Boehme, evident in his views on the god-image and the problem of evil, is reflected in his quoting Boehme more frequently than even Meister Eckhart. Boehme's first book, *Aurora*, published in 1612, coincided with the premieres of two late plays by Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, where a fundamental and profound philosophical connection between the two authors is notable.

Boehme declares that the duality of God has a single root, the 'ungrund', an abyss of pure potentiality. He describes it as 'a nothing' seeking to overflow into creation. In that nothing the principles of light and dark are embedded, each unknown to the other, and each unknown to itself. The light desires to expand and become manifest, while the dark prefers to remain hidden and self-contained. This self-contradiction gives rise to internal friction with God igniting into flames, burning in what Böehme calls a "wheel of anguish." The words of King Lear come to mind here, "I am bound upon a wheel of fire and my tears do smould like molten lead."



This fire arises from God bearing duality within himself, where the friction and heat generated become the force of love in search of itself. This confrontation arises at the 4th stage where the lion, having succeeded in the trials of knowledge, tests the souls' faithfulness to its spiritual nature. For Böehme, good and evil are mutually exclusive yet connected at the root. Christ's love is born of the same principle as the devil's hate, each conceived in and reliant on the existence of the other. The dark manifests as the raging God-the-Father turning narcissistically in on himself, and the world of the light is the principle of the Son "who is his Father's Heart and Love" reaching out in an active loving initiative. The outflowing loving initiative of the son is precarious and vulnerable to being swallowed into the wrathful narcissism of the father, but without that dark principle, there is no need for the outreaching heart of love. The dark ground is a necessary generative requirement for the cultivation of love.

HIDDEN IN TIME'S CHEST

Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets, published in 1609, written over the previous decade. In these texts we see Shakespeare grappling with this battleground between love and strife, or 'wrath' as Boehme puts it. The Sonnets cover themes such as the passage of time, mortality, love, beauty, infidelity, abandonment and unrequited love, imbued with feelings of loss, longing, jealousy, and rage. At their heart, they read as protests against the overwhelming force and seeming supremacy of the dark ground. While accepting that these are necessary experiences in preparing the soul for love, the sonnets lament and interrogate, anxious that the dark principle will prevail.

This Sonnet, is one of my favorites:

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea
But sad mortality o'er-sways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,

Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
 O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out
 Against the wrackful siege of batt'ring days,
 When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
 Nor gates of steel so strong, but time decays?
 O fearful meditation! where, alack,
 Shall time's best jewel from time's chest lie hid?
 Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
 Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
 O, none, unless this miracle have might,
 That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

“Where alack shall time's best jewel from time's chest lie hid?” Shakespeare seems to say that Love, the jewel hidden in Time's chest, can emerge only if it can survive and be scripted in the black ink of dark feelings. Love is not love unless it has been weathered and initiated through a conflict of opposites.

This accords with the alchemical view where the dark background of the prima materia is the necessary starting point for the work. Hence the alchemists reference the 'blackening' as a blessed darkness. There are numerous references in the alchemical literature where 'blackness' is the key: “for in the blackness the true whiteness is hidden”, “it is the key without which there is nothing... they say”, and “that which does not make black cannot make White”. Only “by the gate of blackness thou must come in/To light of Paradyce”. Therefor “...rejoice when you see your matter going black ...” as “the blackness is Saturn, he is the touch stone of truth...”

‘A VAST ROMANCE’

Initiation through a conflict of opposites is the central process in the Winter's Tale. It is a vast romance, rooted in the geographical separation between the formality of the Sicilian court and the mystical world of the Bohemian desert, mirroring the internal split in the soul and the consequences of a man being divided within himself. The story moves from the fire of rage in the first part to the transforming fire energy of love in the second. This transformation involves the opposites being drawn apart seemingly beyond their capacity to hold where ultimately, love is awakened through the ordeal. In Liber Novus Jung argues that the opposites must be far apart for transformation; too close together, and nothing moves.

Leontes, the name of the Sicilian king, means 'lion'. This image encompasses the conflict the hero must submit to and the ordeal he must live out. The lion personifies primitive instinctual desire. Associated with Mercurius, lions embrace the opposites: the contemptible and bestially archaic, and at the same time something of great potential and value (V12 §173). It is the lion's task to confront his fiery, devilish nature. In the Mithraic process involving seven grades of initiation, the fourth stage, following Boehme's model described above, is that of the lion, where the soul having succeeded in the trials of knowledge, it's faithfulness to its spiritual nature is tested. “The soul is turned back and flooded with rage and hatred when courage and fortitude are required to face and attain mastery over the demonic powers of the abyss.”

THE WINTER'S TALE

Let's turn to the concluding scene of The Winter's Tale, perhaps the most sublime and moving in the entire Shakespearean canon.

The court has assembled in anticipation of the unveiling of Hermione's statue,

commissioned in her memory. Her widowed husband King Leontes stands before the sculpted image, haunted by the memory of his enraged jealousy, where his suspicion that his pregnant wife was an adulteress carrying the child of his life-long friend Polixenes, and the subsequent banishment of his newborn daughter, “to a dark and desert place by the sea”. Apollo’s oracle was consulted and the conclusion firm: Hermione was pronounced chaste, the children legitimate, and Polixenes a loyal friend. The king in his fury, unable to tolerate the truthful defiance of the oracle, pronounced the verdict false. Immediately, his son dies, his wife faints, and soon after she is pronounced dead. Told he will die without an heir if “what is lost be not found”, instead of going in search of the lost child, Leontes self-exiles in the bowels of the royal palace. Here Shakespeare is steering us, in the quest of a solution for psychic disturbance, from extraverted problem solving to an introverted pursuit for the truth within.

Sixteen years pass and the curtain is drawn to reveal the statue, where the assembled company, amazed by the likeness and magnificence of its rendering, stand transfixed until Paulina, Hermione’s long-serving and loyal servant bids her, “Tis time; descend; be stone no more...”. Hermione steps down, extends her hand and the estranged couple is reunited, witnessed by their daughter, Perdita, who as Time told us, has “grown in grace equal with wondering”, that very daughter who has returned from exile betrothed to Florizel, son of Polixenes, Leontes old friend, who are reconciled through the marriage of their off spring.

How can this be? How can lives so broken into chaos be healed? What of the madness that overwhelmed the king and gave rise to such violent separation? From whence this radical change of heart. And what of the mystery intimated by the resurrection of the Queen? Of course, she has been alive all along. At the same time this theatrical device awakens us imaginatively, to lost potential that remains alive even in our darkest hour. And it poses the alchemical question, “what brings the stone to life?”

TIME and the CONSTELLATION OF OPPOSITES

So ends the play. Now the character Time had appeared at the midpoint, between the utter desolation of the first half and the hope of recovery and renewal in the second. Time self-identifies as Mercurius and more than announce the necessity of duality, he *celebrates* it. Let’s hear him speak:

TEXT

I, that please some, try all, both joy and terror
Of good and bad, that makes and unfolds error,
Now take upon me, in the name of Time,
To use my wings. Impute it not a crime
To me or my swift passage, that I slide
O’er sixteen years and leave the growth untried
Of that wide gap, since it is in my power
To o’erthrow law and in one self-born hour
To plant and o’erwhelm custom. Let me pass
The same I am, ere ancient’s order was
Or what is now received: I witness to
The times that brought them in; so shall I do
To the freshest things now reigning and make stale
The glistening of this present, as my tale
Now seems to it. Your patience this allowing,
I turn my glass and give my scene such growing
As you had slept between: Leontes leaving,
The effects of his fond jealousies so grieving
That he shuts up himself, imagine me,

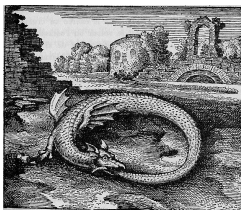
Gentle spectators, that I now may be
 In fair Bohemia, and remember well,
 I mentioned a son o' the king's, which Florizel
 I now name to you; and with speed so pace
 To speak of Perdita, now grown in grace
 Equal with wondering: what of her ensues
 I list not prophecy; but let Time's news
 Be known when 'tis brought forth.
 A shepherd's daughter,
 And what to her adheres, which follows after,
 Is the argument of Time. Of this allow,
 If ever you have spent time worse ere now;
 If never, yet that Time himself doth say
 He wishes earnestly you never may.

So Time, that mercurial trickster, playfully juggles the opposites: “joy/terror, good/bad, that make and unfold error, now take it upon me in the name of Time, to use my wings”. Time celebrates the springtime in Bohemia; he speaks of the “freshest things now reigning, of a scene such growing”, and of “Perdita, grown in grace equal with wondering”. At the same time, Time turns us back and reminds us of where we have come from, with news of the Sicilian king, “Leontes leaving/The effect of his fond jealousies so grieving/that he shuts up himself”.

The play is structured as an alchemical, circular, journey of death and rebirth, division and reunion, dissolution and coagulation, regression and progression, of grief, repentance and recreation. The shepherd's words conclude the first half, “Thou met'st with things dying, I with things newborn” words that coincide with the appearance of Time at the midpoint.

In the documentary on the making of his final film *'The Sacrifice'*, Andrea Tarkovsky offers the following thoughts on 'time'. “I want”, he writes, “to draw attention to how time and its moral implication is in fact turned back”. Time cannot vanish without trace for it is a subjective spiritual category where the time we have lived settles in our soul as an experience placed within time.”

In his book *The Order of Time*, Cavalli argues we do not need to privilege a variable and call it 'time'. What we need is a theory that tells us how variables change with respect to each other... how one thing changes when others change... how things we see in the world vary in relation to each other. Time describes events and the correlations between them. The study of time does nothing but return us to ourselves. “To understand ourselves means to reflect on time. But to understand time we need to reflect on ourselves.” Time means our inescapable relationship to these things which have settled in our soul and serves to bring us back repeatedly and cyclically to ourselves.” In Jung's words, “everything a man will give from his soul is the stone”.



This circular movement implicit in Time corresponds to the logic of psychological life and its tendency to move in a circle. Time is a dragon chasing its own tail, say the alchemists. No matter how much we try and 'move on', a characteristic of living in linear time,

invariably we are turned back on ourselves. Like the uroboric image above, many alchemical images point to an inescapable enclosure. This is the esoteric purpose of battling with psychological complexes. For while complexes are inescapable, they have at their core a numinous center, their inescapability serves the purpose of relating us to a sacred precinct at the heart of the psyche. By suffering through the complex, one involving a perpetual rotation through the opposites, there results the discovery of a timeless dimension, the fountain of youth, an archetypal healing core at the center of the complex.



In the alchemical process, the operation of *circulatio* means a continuous movement of psychological life spiral wise round a center. Through this process a relationship between above and below is heightened, where the higher descends to the lower, and the lower is raised up. Jung says, “It involves a repeated transit through the opposites, over and over again, bringing heaven to earth, raising earth to heaven, whereby the superior and the inferior combine to form the philosopher’s stone”. Psychologically it is the “repeated circuit of all aspects of one’s being, the continual process of getting to know the counter position in the unconscious... a repeated process which serves to bring man’s two natures in relationship to each other.” This process seeks an ‘equality between the elements’, meaning a relationship between the opposites where what was previously above and below, conscious and unconscious, initially sitting at 12 and 6 on the clock, are gradually relocated, where the superior is lowered, the inferior raised up, such that they arrive facing each other, now positioned, eye to eye, at 3 and 9 o’clock. The spirit is earthed, the earth is spiritualized and within this tension a man achieves a conscious standpoint between the opposites which is, arguably, a precondition for authentic humanity.

Just prior to the appearance of *TIME*, the first half of the play concludes with the most infamous stage direction in Shakespeare’s canon, ‘exit pursued by a bear’. Antigonus, as instructed by Leontes, has travelled to Bohemia where he abandons the newborn princess by the sea. The child is discovered by a shepherd, who he names Perdita, meaning the ‘lost one’. At that very moment his son witnesses the mauling of Antigonus by a bear. This coincidence of death and rebirth ends the first half, and the shepherd’s words to his son anchor us meaningfully in the essential circular movement of the play: “thou met’st with things dying, I with things newborn.”

There are thirty-two references to ‘bear’ in the play, an image that holds an essential motif of the story. ‘Beran’ in the Old English, means ‘to carry’. In contemporary English, the meaning is wide ranging. To ‘bear’ means: to bring forth, to give birth; to support, to hold up, to ‘bear responsibility’; to ‘orient or take direction’, to take bearings; to tolerate or endure, as in to ‘bear misfortune’; to convey, transmit or relate, as in to ‘bear tidings’; to corroborate or confirm, as when results ‘bear out’ expectations; to lend aid, to support, to ‘bear arms’; to remember, as to ‘bear in mind’. In the analysis of dreams in the chapter *The Symbolism of the Mandala*, Jung associates the bear with the chthonic element that the dreamer fears might seize him. In the *Winter’s Tale*, ‘bearing shame’ is the hero’s task which *must* seize him, one on which the king’s transformation depends. Leontes’ words reflects this ordeal: “unto our shame perpetual ... our tears shall be our recreation.” He

speaks to a 're-creation' that follows from an honest acceptance of his dark, primitive nature, where a fundamental re-orientation of the personality happens when a man faces and carries the truth of himself.



It is significant that the bear is the sacred animal of the virgin huntress goddess Artemis, and stands, says Jung, "for [her] savage energy and power". According to Homer, Artemis was a lioness amongst women and protectress of children. Queen Hermione was the daughter of the emperor of Russia and given that the bear is the emblem of that country, with its appearance we have, arguably, the rising of the queen in her infernal form and the resurgence of the elemental power of the feminine. With the isolation of Leontes and the devouring of his emissary Antigonus we have the truncating of the masculine as a countermovement, and together the tale speaks to an evolving equality between the counter sexual elements of psyche.

On first reading, this is a story of masculine rage hostile and in conflict with feminine innocence, while a fairy tale reading might consider a similar process at work in the feminine psyche, where an overbearing animus leads to the loss of her feminine soul. There is another level, where for male and female psychology alike, it concerns an inner drama, where "two halves of one being, like the soul and ego, [are] divided and essentially inaccessible to each other", where one part is victimised by the other. This is a story of the inherent incompatibility of two opposing substances within the souls of all humanity, male and female alike, and points to the supreme quest of spiritual alchemy which seeks unification of this inner division.

'Bearing' requires, of necessity, the renunciation of heroic determination. The hero must disable himself from any hope of overcoming his limitations. He can't go into Hades with the intention of conquering the problem. He must forget his sword and submit. To experience the spirit of the depths, he must renounce his urge to eliminate the problem. However, the sword of vengeance is precisely what the ghost of Hamlet's father has handed him. "Revenge this most foul and unnatural murder", the ghost implores him. We know individuation requires utter surrender, and the willingness to bear conflict of the utmost intensity.

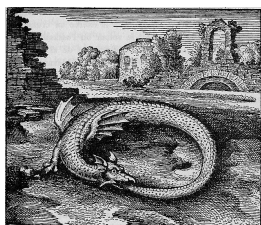
In Jung's psychology the capacity to bear oneself and the capacity to love are inextricably linked. "But love is: to bear and endure oneself," he writes. "We must cultivate love for the lowest in us", and he goes on to say, "I must even love what horrifies me". "[I] must embrace the worthless and the worthy with the same love." A man must "carry the intolerable weight of his own self and his own destiny", says Jung (2,973/460).

SHAME

From this perspective, the experience of shame provides a spiritual opportunity. The capacity to experience shame is the true spiritual root of all human good and the distinctive character of man as a moral being. "Shame activates an intimate relation of myself to

myself,” says Sartre. Here it is seen as an experience that relates an individual to an inner situation, a hidden personal truth that must be faced on the individuation journey. Shame exposes the individual to themselves, “requiring a conscious submission to facts as they are, to that which you are,” says Jung (DSIP 242). Whereas guilt relates me to what I have done, shame relates me to my sense of being, who I feel I am, and that which I must bear.

Salt is a symbol for knowledge and wisdom, and in alchemy self-knowledge is bitter. In both V14 and V12, Jung quotes from the Rosinus Euthicium treatise: When asked “whence cometh the color of the stone”, it is replied, “from its exceeding strong bitterness”. And “whence cometh its bitterness and intensity?” it is asked. “From the impurity of its metal..., it is answered, “in the bitterness that is in its throat the coloring will be found.” It is this “excellent, harsh and bitter acid, which transmutes gold into pure spirit.” Note the dual aspect of salt: bitter in its initial phase whereas in the second ‘whitening’ phase it becomes the ‘Salt of Wisdom’. This is consistent with the prima materia which is at once the initial problematic state, the transforming substance and the final goal. As Maier’s commentary on the following image says, “...the dragon however is the divine water and its tail is its *salt*...: in the initial stage it is the poison and at the final stage it is the means of salvation...”



There is a parallel to be drawn between alchemical salt and the experience of shame. We talk of ‘bitter shame’ and this relates it to the bitterness of alchemical ‘salt’. This is not to dismiss the painful inadequacy of the shame experience and the relentless curse of internal defect. But an essential property of salt is that it is made bitter by its own nature. Definitions of the prima materia, for which there are many, overlap with the notion of shame. Hillman, speaking of the prima materia refers to the ‘ignium occultum’ – the dark hidden passions, the pitch, the lead, the ‘abyssus’, that hollow place in the heart, and finally, the ‘limus microcosmos’ translated by Jung as “the slime of the small world.”

These terms consider the root elemental nature of shame, a sense of oneself independent of cause, as an act of primitive self-conception. Another term for prima materia, ‘radix ipsus’ translates as ‘the root of the matter itself’, or psychologically more aptly as “you are the cause of yourself”. This refers to one’s sense of identity independent of one’s biographical past.

RESTORE THE IMAGE OF THE FATHER

The image of Hamlet’s father carries a complex duality, involving an unconscious split between a Hyperion sun god and a Satyr. The satyr-shadow side, ‘the dark deformed brother’, in Jung’s words, is embodied by Claudius, Hamlet’s uncle. In his opening soliloquy, horrified by his mother’s over hasty marriage, Hamlet compares the two fathers: “That it should come to this! / But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two: / So excellent a king; that was, to this, / Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother / That he might not beteem the winds of heaven / Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth! / Must I remember.”

The father's ghost reveals that he was murdered by Claudius while sleeping in the garden, and orders Hamlet to avenge his death. The avenging wrath of the father is handed to the son, where, symbolically speaking, killing the uncle would eliminate the shadow side of the father, and restore his idealized one-sided image. We hear this in the ghost's command "Remember me", and Hamlet while he feels the call of the underworld, he resists the 'coupling of hell' and calls on his sinews to bear him stiffly up.

O all you host of heaven! O earth! what else?
And shall I couple hell? O, fie! Hold, hold, my heart;
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee!
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee!

And twelve lines later, he concludes, for the third time:

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;
It is 'Adieu, adieu! remember me.'
I have sworn't.

Through the play a different conception unfolds, where restoring the father's image means one where the dark side of the self is essential and cannot be killed off. The ghost's words, "Avenge this foul and most unnatural murder", will come to mean something entirely different from Hamlet's initial understanding. It takes the whole play for Hamlet to accept the influence of the underworld, his complicity with evil and the coupling of hell as an inescapable fact of human life.

Hamlet is torn by doubt that the ghost may be the deceiving devil, manipulating him into committing an act that would damn his soul by sending an innocent man to his death. Hamlet wavers and stalls in need of further evidence that confirms his uncle's guilt. The travelling players arrive unexpectedly, and Hamlet, invigorated, formulates a plan to catch the king by staging "The Murder of Gonzago", a play which replicates the events of his father's murder, a play the players happen to have in their repertoire. Here an archetypal pattern is intimated, where the pattern of killing the father is carried in the psychic repertoire of mankind. Hamlet intuitively feels that Claudius's conscience, if guilty, will be triggered by witnessing the re-enactment of the crime. The plan succeeds, Claudius's guilt gets the better of him and horrified, he runs from the court.

However, in the runup to the performance it dawns on Hamlet that the existence of evil is a shared problem and exists not only within the soul of Claudius but lies *equally* within him. The realization of evil as a psychic reality common to all humanity is *the* change in consciousness that vitalizes Hamlet's capacity for action. Hamlet's unconscious projection, a one-sidedness handed on by his father, was the underlying obstacle preventing his ability to take action, while its withdrawal is the principal reason for Hamlet's galvanization.² For this reason both men, equally guilty, die together at the play's conclusion.

Hamlet's realization of evil as a problem shared with his uncle unfolds through three pivotal scenes: the "rogue and peasant slave" and the "To be or not to be" soliloquies, and the nunnery scene. Following his meeting with the players, when his incapacity to act is mirrored back to him, his avenging purpose is reinvigorated through the soliloquy "Oh what a rogue and peasant slave am I." The development of his renewed purpose is consolidated through the final lines of that speech:

² This would target the main difference between a Freudian and a Jungian reading of the play, a discussion for a future paper

The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil: and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds
More relative than this: the play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

“the play’s the thing wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the king”.

Hamlet has exited the stage, and it is but forty lines later that he reenters and delivers his famous soliloquy "To be or not to be," which builds to the conclusion, “thus conscience doth make cowards of us *all*”. The shifting reference to ‘conscience’ is critical, where the earlier “catching the conscience of the *king*” is now “conscience that makes cowards of us *all*”. This movement from the *king’s* guilt is now turned and focused on us *all*, and specifically onto *himself*, where through the endeavor to catch the conscience of the king he stumbles on the truth of himself and that the murderous impulses that he is tracking in the king are mirrored by those in his own soul. In Jungian terms what he had been pursuing in the king is identified as a projection of his *own* dark shadow which he has, until this moment, been unconscious.

The third scene in Hamlet’s evolution of consciousness is the nunnery scene, which begins with a mix of affectionate play and banter between Hamlet and Ophelia until it becomes evident that Claudius is spying on them, and that Ophelia is complicit in facilitating the surveillance. Overwhelmed by the betrayal, Hamlet's emotions surge, leading him to cruel and brutal treatment of his beloved. Hamlet knows that the king is watching, and the king knows that Hamlet knows. The physical presence of an arras is symbolic of the ever-narrowing divide between them. The closer Hamlet comes to exposing the king's true nature, the more his own inner darkness comes to consciousness.



Then follows the performance of The Murder of Gonzago. The king cannot tolerate the re-enactment of the crime and snaps, exiting with the cry, “give me some light”. In this next image we have a compelling staging of the moment, where the two men stare into the eyes of the other. It captures the psychological significance of the moment where the veil has dropped and both protagonists experience their dark nature reflected back through the knowing eyes of their adversary. Hyperion’s son Helios has descended from his lofty heaven while the satyr aspect, previously confined to hell, has been raised up to consciousness such that an equality of the elements has been established, signaling a development of consciousness, where above and below, darkness and light, good and evil, face each other signaling a relationship on a conscious level.

Given the threat that Hamlet poses, Claudius sends him away to England escorted by his university friends. Soon back in Denmark Hamlet reports to Horatio about his journey and the reasons for his sudden and unexpected return. Three life changing events happened. First, in the middle of the night, Hamlet awakes and, on a hunch, investigates the contents

of his companions' bag. To his astonishment he discovers a letter written to the English monarch, signed by Claudius, ordering Hamlet's immediate execution. Next, Hamlet executes a counterplot; he writes a letter, skillfully imitating his uncle's handwriting, which orders the execution of his friends immediately upon their arrival in England. In doing so, *he acts towards them in the same way that his uncle acted towards his father*. By chance, he carried his father's signet ring, and it was the imprint of that signet that sealed and authenticated the letter. The ship was then invaded by pirates, who kidnapped Hamlet, and taking a liking to him ensured his safe return to Denmark, leaving his friends to their fate.

The significance of the signet ring is far reaching, not only that Hamlet carried his father's ring, but what that seal had come to mean. Previously it had been the ring of his late father, while that same ring was now in the charge of the current king his father's brother. Hamlet consigned his friends to their fate in a manner that replicated the murder of his father by his uncle. By identifying with his uncle's murderous shadow, and living it, Hamlet gained access to his own demonic strength, and by doing so he brought that shadow aspect back to the image of the father, and holding those conflicting opposites together, he reconfigured and restored the archetypal image of the Father in its totality, in which a tension of opposites, light and dark, Hyperion sun god and satyr are reunited. By taking on the shadow aspect that had been denied by his father, he addressed those one-sided limitations and included the opposite, thereby restoring the archetype in its totality, symbolized by the circular image in the form of a ring. It is *that* ring that saved him, one that carried the imprint of *two* men, *both* who called themselves father, where *both* aspects of the father, light and dark, are held together.

This is a story in which a man takes on and acts out his shadow, and by embracing that neglected aspect he completes himself. In life, deo concedente, we might be free of such a fate, but this does not exempt us from a full-frontal acceptance of our capacity for evil. Jung argued that the word evil has become commonplace, and he went to great lengths to convey what he meant by the sincere and frightening acceptance of our complicity in evil. This acceptance is a development of consciousness that heralds the next step in the evolution of humanity and shadow work as it is pursued in psychological work is endeavoring to make that step.

Not only does man have to accept his collusion in the reality of evil, he *needs* evil, says Jung. In so far as he is attached to a one-sided idea of himself as 'good', this idea of himself must be sacrificed, because such an idea of himself as 'good' is an illusory conviction that promotes inauthentic life, an idea that undermines him from the depth of soul and saps his strength. The energy required in the denial of the shadow aspect and the maintenance of an illusion of goodness creates psychic disorder. To counteract this illusory one-sidedness, he needs evil, and in Jung's words, with this acceptance, "I restored the primordial powers of my own soul."

We are left with a mystery: why, having been rescued by pirates, did Hamlet choose to return to Denmark where his death was almost certain. Having accepted evil, and acted on it, he must take responsibly for it, accept his guilt, and atone for it. By returning to Denmark Hamlet proves he is capable of sacrifice and lives it out. Nietzsche remarked that a man spends his whole life finding his truth and must then be prepared to die for it. Hamlet must return home to fulfil his destiny. He must confront his uncle and face the shadow that the father-king's unconsciousness had denied.

Both Jung and Shakespeare impress on us that the dark and light aspects of our nature, and their acceptance are, in Jung's words, "the ineradicable preconditions of psychic life:

The one-after-another is a bearable prelude to the deeper knowledge of the side-by-side, for this is an incomparably more difficult problem. Again, the view that good and evil are spiritual forces

outside us, and that man is caught in the conflict between them, is more bearable by far than the insight that the opposites are the ineradicable and indispensable preconditions of all psychic life, so much so that life itself is guilt. V14 §206

Hamlet learnt that the idealised image of the father could not be restored. He renounced this quest when he realised that his evil uncle was a mirror of his own darkness, one that reflected his father's unlived life. Hamlet was called to accept what the father had denied. The ghosts cry, "foul and unnatural murder" refers to the death of the self that arises when the shadow is denied, and Hamlet's impotent masculinity, reflected in his inability to act, was a symptom of his shadow denying one-sidedness. Rather than kill the 'devil-satyr-uncle' it was the darkness in himself that he had to accept, and by doing so the one-sided psychic imprint of the father was completed. Leontes too was destined to face his devilish nature, but he met his devil at the beginning of his story, his transformation requiring a wide gap of time for the enraged beast to incubate and for the truth of himself to settle in his soul. The ungovernable rage in these men was their inability to handle transpersonal energy and its uprising is a necessary response to the moral truths that have been rejected by a consciousness that is identified with the light side of nature. The hero's task was to encounter and accept their darkness and by so doing overcome the contradictions of their inner world, a dualistic view of the soul where the role of the higher side is to repress the lower aspect.

This was Hamlet's error: in taking the command of his father's ghost *literally*, he failed to appreciate its deeper, symbolic meaning, that it was the *internalised* one-sided image of the uncle father that had to be confronted. The way of the old father was to deny the shadow aspect and demand restoration of the old image, reflected in the urgency of the ghost father's words 'remember me'. Yet hidden within that command lies a deeper prospective meaning. Rather than a regressive reformation of the old image of the father, that trisyllabic word points to the neglected fourth, the previously rejected and forgotten aspect. Here 'remember' means to gather the scattered parts and reassemble them such that denied aspect is included. The call to complete the father is the fate of every son, not in accordance with an idealised image, but according to a new way, where only through the acceptance of the shadow will the image be completed and renewed.

Reclaiming the two-sidedness of the father was prerequisite to love. For love to be, the two sides of nature are required. "Love is the way", says Jung, "but make sure your love has a left and a right." Standing over Ophelia's grave, Hamlet jumps in despairing of his denial of that which had been most true and dear. However, it's the final act and Hamlet stumbles too late upon this painful truth. At the same time, it is within the love quest that the shadow is constellated and the incapacity to love is exposed. Following his sixteen years isolation, and prior to the unveiling of the stone of his former beloved, Leontes stands in awe at its majesty, "Does not the stone rebuke me for being more stone than it", he asks. Even at the final hour, the king carries his shadow and thus honours the psychological precondition indispensable for the recovery of the miraculous stone, that a man accepts and carries his lower nature, and through the persistence of this commitment he is inwardly transformed and spiritually reborn.
