



Mandala Consulting's Jung Pages
by Anthony Wilson

ANALYSING DREAMS: AMPLIFICATION

Amplification is, according to Sharp, *a method of association based on the comparative study of mythology, religion and fairy tales, used in the interpretation of images in dreams and drawings.* [1] Samuels et al. define amplification as a part of Jung's method for interpretation involving using *mythic, historical and cultural parallels to clarify and make ample the metaphorical content of dream symbolism.* [2] They say that Jung regarded amplification as the basis of his synthetic method. Whereas a reductive method of analysis would reveal causality, a synthetic method was more interested a teleological perspective. In other words, not so much what caused an event or disturbance but what purpose did it serve. What did it lead to, what did it prevent?

In previous articles we saw methods of recording dreams and making associations with the individual dream motifs and images. So far what we have considered relates largely to the personal Unconscious. Jung says that sometimes, when for example our relationship to a person is likely to make our mind suffer, we might have an archetypal dream. Mostly our dreams are from the personal unconscious. They reveal us to ourselves.

Sometimes, but not so often I think, our dreams tell us something about the world outside ourselves. Mostly, they illustrate our projections and provide a compensatory view, differing from our conscious attitude. They give voice to our unconscious personality.

Usually we dream for ourselves... *The essential content of the dream action... is a sort of finely attuned compensation of the one-sidedness, errors, deviations, or other shortcomings of the conscious attitude.* [3] Jung stated that the aim of analytical therapy was *a realization of unconscious content in order that compensation may be re-established.* [4]

Since the unconscious psyche seems not to be limited by time and space, and since part of its contents are that which is coming to consciousness within us, our dreams may occasionally supply hints and portents of the future. In dreams people have foreseen disasters. These do seem to be objective, applying to things outside ourselves. However, when we have such dreams, our first thought should be to consider the train smash, the airplane crash, the Twin Towers attack *inside* ourselves.

It is tempting to want to see the disaster in our dreams as in some way commenting on the outside world or perhaps foretelling the future. However, it is a better starting point to think about how this event relates to me. Am I headed for a crash of some sort? Am I flying too high? Do I need to be brought down to earth? Is my attitude unrealistic? *Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.* [5] Or as the Jewish philosopher, Gersonides commented, *Pride does not just precede the fall, it also preempts the fall.* [6] This would seem to suggest that we bring about our own downfall, perhaps as a compensatory event.

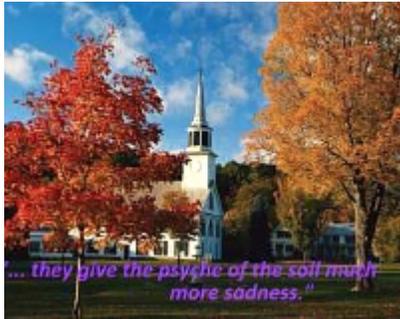
AMPLIFICATION: DEEPER MEANING

Amplification is about looking for archetypal content and getting fresh insights and newer shades of meaning. To see all such parallels in our dreams would require us to have an encyclopedic knowledge. That is one reason why we go to an Analyst. Analysts have some of that knowledge. Jung certainly had the sort of knowledge in large amounts. Analysts can never have enough knowledge of legends, myths, fairy stories etc., nor do they ever stop learning. Part of the core curriculum of analyst training of the Los Angeles C G Jung Institute, for example, is "Fairy Tales, Myth and Amplification".

As we get into a habit of pondering the psychological meaning of events or motifs (not just the cause and effect, but also the purpose), we begin to read novels and watch movies in a new light, seeing layers of possible meaning. We understand better what is happening in movies, for example. A good way to get into amplification is to get familiar with the pattern and fabric of myths and fairy stories by reading them and to read commentary on them.

Bruno Bettelheim (1903-1990) discussed the meaning of fairy tales, from a Freudian perspective in his seminal work on the subject, *The Uses of Enchantment: the Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, Knopf, New York. He posited that, if children were to read fairy stories, they would gain a stronger sense of meaning and purpose in their lives. They would learn about the difficulties faced by their heroes and how they overcame them, thus preparing them for life. Bettelheim was imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp between 1938 and 1939 and committed suicide in 1990. (I make a personal observation here. I have noticed that some former inmates of concentration camps commit suicide. It seems like quite a few do this. But I have no data. Does the archetype of death follow them, or is it survivor guilt?) Bettelheim was a controversial figure. His theory that the "Refrigerator Mother" caused autism in the child is discounted today and some have questioned his qualifications, but his work on fairy tales is worth reading. We don't necessarily have to agree with his interpretations, to gain much from reading, *The Uses of Enchantment*. It helps us to see stories from a new perspective.

Robert A Johnson, an American analyst and author [7], said that all Americans have absorbed the culture, and archetypes of the country through the soles of their feet. A romantic notion and one that is echoed by James Hillman, who senses a mood in the geographic features of land. In a movie about Jung, Hillman says landscape has a mood. [8]

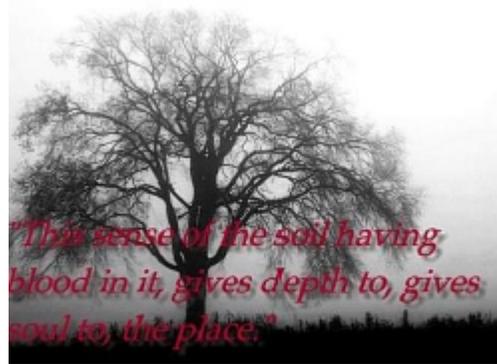


There's a darkness in the soil here. New England has the dead Indians, and the dead witches and the dead Puritans... You know we're walking over the dead really.

And they give the psyche of the soil much more sadness. This sense of the soil having blood in it gives depth to, gives soul to, the place.

Now if the mood is in the landscape – not just in your eye – then it's got soul and the history of the landscape will be there too

James Hillman.



If the culture, the history and the archetypes of South Africa have seeped into our psyches, almost without our knowing it, and if we understand and appreciate something of the myths, stories, legends, tales, songs, dances, art and culture of those who people the land now and those who were here in the past, then we gain a sense of who and where we are. Where we have come from and what surrounds us. It soaks into us.

In his August 1957 filmed interview with Richard Evans, Jung commented on the strangeness of not understanding one's background.

One doesn't see what an education without humanities is doing to man. He loses his connection with his family, as it were – the whole stem, the tribe, the connection with the past that he lives in, that in which man always has lived. Man has always lived in a myth, and we think we are able to be born today and to live with no myth – without history.

That is a disease – absolutely abnormal – because man is not born every day. He is born once in a specific historical setting with specific historical qualities, and therefore is only complete when he has a relation to these things.1

ONE OF JUNG'S PATIENT'S DREAMS

In the 1957 interview with Richard Evans, Jung gives an example of a dream with archetypal content. He describes the patient's dream, in which he himself appears, and his own thoughts. The two are almost intertwined. (This illustrates the very close way in which Jung worked with his patients.)

His patient was an intelligent young woman, a student of philosophy. She had formed a transference onto Jung. She projected "Father" onto Jung.

Jung says that in the woman's dream he was standing in an enormous field of wheat, ripe for harvest.

I was a giant and I held her in my arms like a baby, and the wind was blowing over the field of wheat. Now you know when the wind is blowing over a wheat field it waves, and with these waves I swayed, like putting her, as it were, to sleep. And she felt as being in the arms of a god, of the godhead, and I thought, "Now the harvest is ripe, and I must tell her." And I told her.

"You see, what you want, and what you project into me, because you are not conscious of it is – you have the idea of a deity you don't possess; therefore you see it in me" That clicked.

He said that she saw the missing value in herself, and that she had been projecting it onto her Analyst. Then she saw that she was in the arms of that archetypal idea. Jung describes this patient's dream as a living experience of the archetype *...a God of nature, of vegetation. He was the wheat himself. He was the spirit of the wheat – the spirit of the wind, and she was in the arms of that numen.*

Jung went on to explain.

That is the numinous experience, you see, and that is the thing that people are looking for – an archetypal experience – that is, then an incorruptible value. They depend upon other conditions; they depend upon their desires, their ambitions. They depend upon other people, because they have no value in themselves. They have nothing in themselves. They are only rational and are not in possession of a treasure that would make them independent. [9]

AN EXAMPLE OF AMPLIFICATION: One of My Dreams

Transference

...the experiencing of feelings, drives, attitudes, fantasies and defences toward a person in the present, which do not befit that person but are a repetition of reactions originating in regard to significant persons of early childhood, unconsciously displaced onto figures in the present. The two outstanding characteristics of a transference are: it is a repetition and it is inappropriate.

Greenson, R.R. (1967) *The Technique and Practice of Psychoanalysis*, London, Howgarth Press, cited in Brown, D. and Pedder, J. (1991) *Introduction to Psychotherapy: an outline of psychodynamic principles and practice*, 2nd. Edition, Routledge, London and New York

A particular case of projection, used to describe the unconscious, emotional bond that arises in the analysand toward the analyst.

Sharp, D (1991) *C G Jung Lexicon: a primer of terms*

Dream, August 10, 2007 (edited)

I go to sleep. My grandmother wakes me to do some signwriting. I object strenuously at being woken. "Why me?" I protest, "I want to continue sleeping"

I see the wall where I am to write. It is pebble-dashed and covered with a thick coating of white paint. I must write in a square with lozenge shapes at each corner set at 45°.

I had a dream on August 10, 2007 which, on the face of it, seemed simple enough in its content, although trying to fathom out the depths of its meaning took many hours, over several days.

I had my psychological journal to refer to, so I had some handle on what was happening at that time and how I was acting and reacting. I had also my gratitude journal.

I recorded the dream in brief note form in the middle of the night and I wrote down everything I could remember about the dream on waking in the morning.

One important thing to note is that my wife woke me and told me I was making a groaning noise in my sleep, as if I were trying to speak but unable to do so. It indicates strong emotion, I think. I noted my mood on waking and the mood of the dream. Then I did my associations and began to get a glimmer of what the dream might mean. Forgive me if I do not reveal all the details here.

When I did the amplification, more meaning suggested itself. One of the problems with amplification is that it can encourage Intellectualization, an Ego Defense Mechanism defined thus, [10]

INTELLECTUALIZATION

THE INDIVIDUAL DEALS WITH EMOTIONAL CONFLICT OR INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL STRESSORS BY THE EXCESSIVE USE OF ABSTRACT THINKING OR THE MAKING OF GENERALIZATIONS TO CONTROL OR MINIMIZE DISTURBING FEELINGS.

In recording the dream and in doing my associations I had poured energy into the unconscious content. In doing amplification, I poured in yet more energy. It gripped me more than I imagined it would and for longer. Scholarship, academic learning and Thinking in general is an inferior side of me, undeveloped and, in a sense, unconscious. It can absorb me for hours. Being an Intuitive and having ADD, I wander off track easily. It is difficult to maintain focus. The activities can absorb me completely: hours slip by and I have a mass of undisciplined notes and sketches.

Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared, and began to write on the plaster of the palace wall. The king turned pale with alarm: his thigh joints went slack and his knees began to knock.

Dan 5:5

The writing reads: *Mene, Mene, Tekel and Parsin*. The meaning of the words is this: *Mene*: God has measured your sovereignty and put an end to it; *Tekel*: you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting, *Parsin*: your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and the Persians.

Dan 5:25-28

That same night, the Chaldean king Belshazzar was murdered and Darius the Mede received his kingdom, at the age of sixty two.

Dan 5:30-31



One of my first associations was "The Writing on the Wall", a phrase I knew, but not its origin. This led me to the Bible and the account of Belshazzar's Feast in Daniel 5.

Next I discovered a familiar painting, whose title I did not know. Rembrandt Harmenoon van Rijn's (1606-1696) "Belshazzar's Feast".

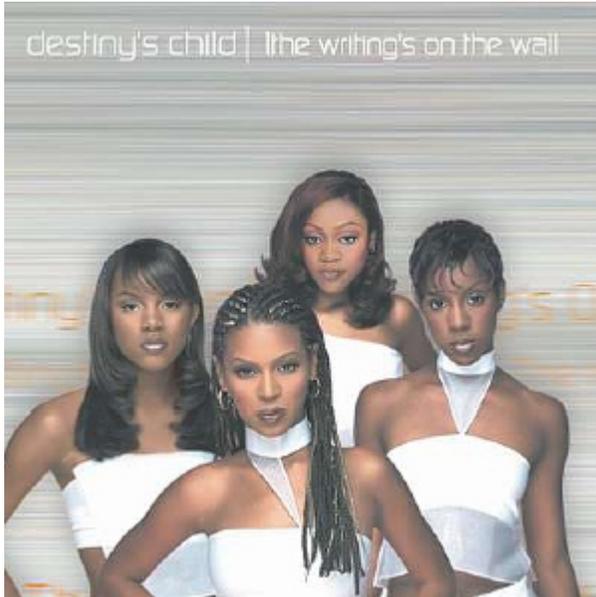
My personal associations of the writing on the wall were of something made evident, something plain for all to see. I was dimly aware that "the writing on the wall" had an element of warning, something negative being implied but this would not have been the main way I understood the phrase. Reading Daniel 5 and studying dramatic Rembrandt's picture and the looks of horror on the faces of the people, made it clear to me that the warning was one of imminent catastrophe as a result of the behaviour of Belshazzar and his guests. I had always used the phrase much more lightly and glibly.

In probing for other people's meaning of the phrase, "the writing on the wall" I had discovered some of its cultural and collective meanings. My own associations were thus enriched and overlaid. A significance became attached to the dream that it did not have before.

SYNCHRONICITY

Sometimes the psychic and material worlds are linked. *The synchronistic experience occurs where two kinds of reality (i.e. "inner" and "outer") intersect. [11]*

I wrote three days after this dream, on August 13 "*Synchronicity. A friend, Daniel Doherty, send me a chapter of the PhD thesis he is writing entitled, "The Writing is on the Wall". The writing he referred to was a collection of his flipcharts, posted around all four walls of a room. A little while after this I attended Daniel's seminar, "Developing Reflective Practice". Daniel did not know where the phrase, "Writing on the Wall" came from, nor was he aware that his namesake, Daniel, had written about it.*



This synchronicity helped draw my attention to this dream. That, I suspect, was its purpose; another way of saying, this unconscious content is not to be ignored. In therapy, synchronicities, sometimes occurring in the lives of both patient and therapist, seem to highlight problem areas which may not have received sufficient attention.

Later, another synchronicity occurred. I had a dream in which the name of a singing group popped up, "Destiny's Child." Now, I have little tolerance for pop music. The music that I am bombarded with in shopping malls, supermarkets, gyms or passing cars, irritates me. I didn't even know that I knew there was a group called "Destiny's Child." When I looked them up, I found that they were an R & B group (Rhythm and Blues, I think) reputed to be the world's best selling female vocal group. In 1999, they released an album entitled, "The Writing's on the Wall".

With the power of the Internet, it didn't take long to find the lyrics of the song of the album's name. My unconscious psyche knows full well that I surf the Net for information. Maybe it put this group into my dream to lead me to this – maybe not.

*[Kelly:] LeToya Barzini I wanna thank you
For having you organize
This meeting here today*

*[LeToya:] And Kelly Steracki I also want to thank you
And all the other
Dons of the four families
Beyonce Corleone, from the South West Ah,
LaTavia Menser from the Four-Four*

*[LaTavia:] Our objective of this meeting today is to discuss Destiny's Child's
Commandments of relationships*

*[Kelly:] You know it's so unfortunate, so unnecessary
For us to end up with broken hearts*

*[LaTavia:] Yes Godfather
Times have changed
Relationships aren't like the old days
You know?*

*[LeToya:] See what we need is a man of his word
All this, uh cheating, uh backstabbing, uhm hating
No more, no more*

[LaTavia:] But Godfather, how do we avoid all these mishaps?

*[Beyonce:] It's obvious,
The Writing's On The Wall;
Thou shalt not hate*

I have nothing to lose from obeying, "Destiny's Child's Commandments of Relationships." or from looking for the hatred buried so deep within me that I'm unaware of it, it's unconscious.

Some reflection caused me to remember that hate is not the opposite of love. The opposite of love is power. Love and hate can coexist. Love and Power can't. We all have both inside ourselves. Hatred is part of my Shadow and yours. We all have good and bad, positive and negative, developed and primitive within ourselves. Our task is to make sure we know this and are responsible for our Shadow. Projecting it, denying the Shadow is a sign of our lack of development.

Dreams messages have a habit of coming round again and again, if we don't get them the first time. This synchronicity, the link between, the signwriting dream, Daniels writing and the Destiny's Child dream, may have been pointing to an unrecognized hatred that I harbour. If I look for evidence of unrecognized hatred within myself, it can only benefit me – and the world. If I add one small part to the total of human consciousness it can only benefit all of humankind.

And if I am wrong, and this was not the message of the dream, then, - no worries. I won't have wasted my time looking for hatred inside myself. The message will come around again in another dream with a different set of images. All that is required of me is to work on these new images, experience them and try to understand their meaning. Even if I don't understand, beholding and honouring the images alone, will have contributed to my healing and wholeness in some way.

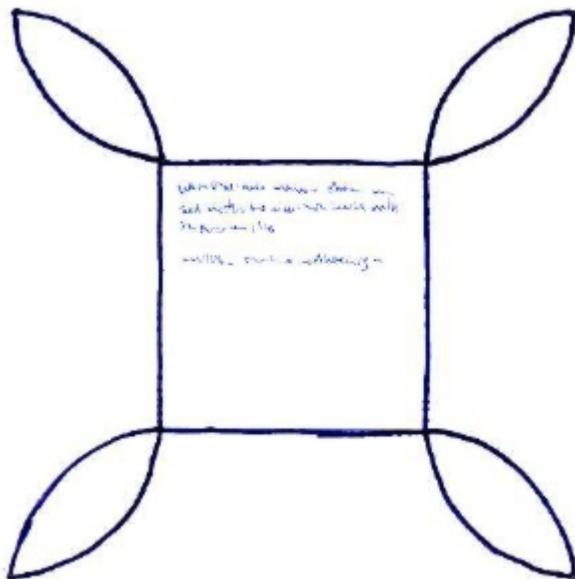
The sentiment of this song, stop hating, seems easier to take than, a warning of divine retribution, death and the imminent collapse of a whole kingdom. I must root out the source of hatred within me; I must examine my conscience; where lies the hatred within me? Perhaps the consequences for not tackling this problem are a loss of grace, of God's favour, death of my soul by slow corrosion and the loss of my whole realm. Is this the meaning of being forced by the Great Mother to wake and begin the writing on the wall? Or am I to be a prophet of some sort is it a warning I must give others? Unlikely, the bell tolls for me, I suspect.

In amplifying the sleep motif and the reluctance and anger at having to wake, I recalled the words of Eckhart Tolle [12] / *avoid the now by sleeping....and... Not facing "what is" fully.* I summarize Tolle's precepts as:

- You are not your thoughts, be aware of them, but don't be dominated by them
- Be aware of your "body-pain"
- Only the present moment exists – accept it, live in it

THE SHAPE

In my dream there is a specific shape marked out for me. It is in this that I must write.



The shape was already painted on the wall. I had to do my signwriting in it. I seemed to know how it should look: small, slightly spidery writing. I would say it was a sort of simple Mandala, a square with four mandorlas outside at 45° to each corner.

I take this part of my dream to refer in some way to the Individuation process. Mandalas are a symbol of the Self. Edward Edinger writes,

Quaternity, Mandala images emerge in times of psychic turmoil and convey a sense of stability and rest. The image of the four-fold nature of the psyche provides stabilizing orientation. It gives a glimpse of static eternity. [13]

Four is a significant number of completeness

- Four limbs, two arms, two legs
- Four elements: Earth Air Fire and Water (*Earthly joy is riches and impedimenta; aquatic joy is softness and repose; fiery pleasure is desire and love; airy delight is liberty and movement. [14]* Of the elements, two are active –fire and air, and two are passive – earth and water [15]. Hence the masculine, creative nature of the first two, and the feminine, receptive and submissive nature of the second pair. [16]
- Four seasons: Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter
- Four Cardinal Points of the Compass: North, South, East, West
- Four Ashrams of Life: Brahmacharya/Student, Grahasta/Householder, Vanaprastha/Hermitage, Sanyasa/Renunciate
- Four Humours: Choleric, Melancholic, Phlegmatic, Sanguine
- Four Psychological Functions; Intuition, Sensation, Thinking, Feeling

Mandala is from the Sanskrit, meaning “magic circle” Jung saw it as a symbol of the psyche. Samuels et al. say, *though Mandalas can express a potential for wholeness... they can also function defensively for people who are fragmented. [17]*

A Mandorla is an oval or lozenge shape formed by two circles intersecting. It symbolizes the intersection of two opposite or complimentary spheres, for example the two spheres of heaven and earth. *It is a perpetual sacrifice that regenerates creative force through the dual streams of ascent and descent, (appearance and disappearance, life and death, evolution and involution. [18]*

The very act of finding out recording as much about the dream as possible, struggling to recreate as perfectly as possible, the difficult-for-me-to-draw square with mandorlas, doing association and amplification, makes the unconscious more conscious. Even if I never find a satisfactory interpretation, it will still have helped me.

Amplification is about finding out collective meanings for ones dream images and motifs. Today, we are blessed with the Internet. If we are discerning we will find knowledge. If we look for meanings, we will find them.

Anthony Wilson

[1] Sharp, D (1991) *C G Jung Lexicon: a primer of terms and concepts*, Inner City Books, Toronto

[2] Samuels, A, Shorter, B and Plaut, F. (1986) *A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and New York

[3] On the Nature of Dreams, CW8

[4] *XI Definitions* CW6, para 693

[5] Proverbs 16:18 King James Version

[6] Rabbi Levi ben Gershom (1288-1344) aka Gersonides or Ralbag, born in Bagnols, France

[7] Robert A Johnson's works are well worth reading and reflecting upon. The titles alone are inviting, somehow you know you are going to be inspired. Here is a sample of his offerings.

Balancing Heaven and Earth : A Memoir of Visions, Dreams and Realizations

Contentment : A Way to True Happiness

Ecstasy : Understanding the Psychology of Joy

Femininity : Lost and Regained

He : Understanding Masculine Psychology

Inner Work : Using Dreams and Creative Imagination for Personal Growth and Integration

Living Your Unlived Life: Coping with Unrealized Dreams and Fulfilling Your Purpose in the Second Half of Life

Lying with the Heavenly Woman : Understanding and Integrating the Feminine Archetypes in Men's Lives

Owning Your Own Shadow : Understanding the Dark Side of the Psyche

She : Understanding Feminine Psychology

The Fisher King and the Handless Maiden: Understanding the Wounded Feeling Function in Masculine and Feminine Psychology

Transformation : Understanding the three levels of Masculine Consciousness

[8] James Hillman in the 1987 movie, by Stephen Segaller, *The Wisdom of the Dream: C G Jung, Part Three: The Image of the Dream*

[9] Ibid. p. 229

[10] American Psychiatric Association: (1994) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Fourth Edition, American Psychiatric Association, Washington DC.

[11] Samuels et. al. op.cit.

[12] Eckhart Tolle (born 1948) *The Flowering of Human Consciousness*, May 2004

[13] Edward Edinger, source misplaced, will be corrected in later editions of this webpage

[14] Gaston Bachelard (1943) *L'Air et les Songes*, Paris,

[15] Carl Jung, *The Psychology of the Transference*, CW16

[16] Cirlot, JE (1971) *A Dictionary of Symbols* (2nd. Edition), Routledge, London

[17] Samuels et al, op. cit.

[18] Cirlot, op. cit.