

Coaching-In-Depth II: Dr. Jung as a Mid-21st-Century Executive Coach

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This is the second in a series of essays about the potential perspectives and practices provided by noted psychologists, philosophers and theologians if they were to be operating in the middle of the 21st Century as professional coaches or consultants. The first of these essays placed Sigmund Freud in the role of life coach (Bergquist, 2026). I offered a wide range of perspectives and practices that might have emerged from the unique, in-depth way in which “Sig” Freud approached his relationship with people he was working with during the mid-21st Century.

While it was bit of a stretch to remove the therapy couch in Freud’s office so that he might be meeting face-to-face with his coaching clients (rather than psychoanalytic patients), the stretch is not as great with Carl Jung, since we know that he often met with businessmen (particularly from the United States) who brought their work-related problems to Jung’s office in Zurich, Switzerland (Bair, 2003). It is interesting to note that these leaders of the thriving American enterprise of the early 20th Century often were “lured” to Zurich because their wives were already receiving psychotherapeutic services from Dr. Jung and his Jungian colleagues.

While the stretch is not too great when we envision Carl Jung meeting with business leaders, it is something of a stretch when we consider the remarkably innovative and often mind-altering concepts and modes of assistance being offered by Jung to his therapy patients. What would it have been like if Jung were living today and was just as cutting-edge in his work with these business leaders—realizing that Dr. Jung might have applied some of these cutting-edge perspectives and practices when meeting (often informally) with the visiting Americans.

In this essay, I will first suggest several of the perspectives and practices that Jung might have used which were not too far afield from what a contemporary executive coach might do with their client. I will then push the boundaries and consider the potential use by Jung of some of the more controversial perspectives and practices in his remarkably large toolbox.

I invite you to explore with me some of the perspectives and practices in which Carl Jung might have engaged by offering a hypothetical case study (much as I did in the essay about Sigmund Freud as a Life Coach). I imagine that Carl Jung had a nephew, called Kurt Jung. Like his uncle, Kurt Jung has been fully engaged in analytic perspectives and practices. He has benefited, however, from some of the recent perspectives and practices provided by other analysts and by other therapists, consultants and researchers in the fields of psychology and neurobiology.

He is about to meet with an American businessman named Mitch Lauridsen coming to Zurich to meet with Dr. Kurt Jung. Like his uncle, Kurt Jung has attracted many women to his office in Zurich, where he provides both analytically oriented organizational consultation and analytic psychotherapy. Four months ago, Mitch’s wife came to see Dr. Jung to get help with post-partum depression after the birth of their second child. She is still in Zurich, has received greatly appreciated assistance from Kurt Jung, and has encouraged her husband to join her in Zurich to receive assistance from Dr. Jung. Here is a bit of background regarding Mitch Lauridsen.

Mitch Lauridsen

Mitch was 54 years old when he traveled to meet with Dr. Jung. He is the publisher of several regional newspapers located in one of the western states in America. The Mountain Times, Valley Times, and Lakeside Times are all published by Mitch, with the Mountain Times being by far the largest newspaper, serving a small

city of about 100,000 residents. Western Times Press, the organization which publishes these three newspapers, is staffed by 45-50 employees. In addition to Mitch and his executive assistant, there is a vice president of production (with a team of 10), a vice president of sales and marketing (with a team of 7), a vice president of human resources, strategic planning and IT (information technology) (with a staff of 5), a Treasurer and VP of Finance (with a staff of 4) and an editorial staff of fourteen people, headed by the Western Times editor.

At the present time, Western Times Press produces both a print and digital version of the Mountain Times every day (with an expanded Sunday edition). The Valley Times and Lakeside Times are produced once a week, with the Sunday Mountain Times also being sent to all Valley and Lakeside subscribers. Mitch and his sales and marketing VP have brought in several additional printing projects. These are primarily supermarket ads and coupons, and a couple of regular informal circulars that focus on the arts and crafts in this Western region.

The major challenges that Mitch faces concerns technology. This is both about the use of robots to print the three newspapers, and the use of Artificial Intelligence to assist in the writing and editing of the three papers. He has recently hired Gwen as VP of strategic planning and information technology (along with HR) to direct a writing and editing initiative, while his VP for production has successfully handled the introduction of robots in the production process.

While Mitch does expect Dr. Jung to be conversant in matters of robotics and A.I., he does believe that the good and wise doctor might help him loosen his own ridge grip on his publishing business. Mitch founded this business 20 years ago, has been tightly controlling its operations for all these years, and has only opened to new ideas with the successful introduction of robotics by his Production VP, and hiring of Gwen to expand the scope and vision of his business. While Mitch has become open to these new technologies, he still is a “control freak” and has an editorial staff that is resistant to Gwen’s expanded perspective. The folks who write the stories are accustomed to Mitch’s tight control. They appreciate his clear and consistent guidance but also find him to often be quite demanding. Gwen is a source of concern for his editorial staff: will A.I. take over their jobs?

Here he is, meeting his wife, Joan, in Zurich. He sets up an appointment with Dr. Jung for the following Tuesday and spends the weekend enjoying some time away from work, joining Joan on a cruise around the beautiful Zurich lake. And then a trip to Interlochen on Monday.

Session One

Mitch is fresh, relaxed and ready to do work with Dr. Jung. He enters the richly textured office of Carl Jung and is created by an elderly man with warm eyes and rustic clothing (perfectly aligned with the culture of Switzerland). Mitch noticed that there was a large picture of Dr. Jung’s esteemed uncle on the wall next to a bookcase filled with books and a couple of small sculptures. There was also a bonsai tree located on a small table. Everything seemed to be a mixture of several cultures, including Asian.

Dr. Jung asked Mitch to sit in a comfortable chair and opens the conversation by asking Mitch to tell him why he traveled all the way to Switzerland for some assistance when there are many great people to converse with in the United States (there is considerable humor in this statement by Dr. Jung). Dr. Jung then paused as he reframed his question: “Tell me what is ruffling your psyche.” Mitch found this to be a curious way to frame the invitation to start working with Dr. Jung.

Convening Concerns

Mitch shares some basic information about his business and his desire to become more open and embracing of a relaxed leadership style. Mitch also mentions that he has traveled to Zurich because his wife, Joan, has found

her time working with Dr. Jung and his associates to be of great value. Dr. Jung smiles and indicates that he has greatly appreciated the hard work that Mitch's wife has been doing. Dr. Jung then became a bit stern and asked Mitch to provide more details regarding the real issues he was bringing to Zurich.

Mitch hesitated for a moment and then said that he has been struggling in particular with his Vice President of Production. This man has been with Mitch since he started his newspaper business 20 years ago. Their families are very close. His Production VP, Frank, has worked with him not only at the newspaper, setting up and running Mountain Times' multiple presses, but also on the baseball field and basketball court as a fellow coach of youth teams. Frank has always been an innovator, having introduced robotics into the production process. However, he is now resisting the innovations brought into Western Times by Gwen, the new VP of Strategic Planning. These innovations primarily center on the introduction and significant expansion of the digital version of the Western Times newspapers.

There is considerable tension between Frank and Gwen, especially with the potential layoff of several members of Frank's production team, because of a reduced printing of newspapers with an increase in production of digitalized versions of the newspaper. The "relaxed" leadership style relates in part to Mitch's need to somehow take a different approach in working with both Frank and Gwen. Currently, he is very "un-relaxed" with Frank, his long-term friend and working colleague. His relationship with Frank is in deep trouble and it is hurting the morale of all the employees at Western Times.

Dr. Jung took notes during this disclosure by Mitch. He frequently nodded and expressed dismay as Mitch talked about his painfully fractured relationship with Frank. Dr. Jung suggested that they take a short break and invited Mitch to drink some water provided in an elegant pitcher located on the table beside the Bonsai Plant. Mitch mentioned that he also has a Bonsai plant in his office and worries a bit about his assistant taking care of it while he is in Zurich.

Associations and Concerns

This first session resumed. Dr. Jung asks Mitch to participate in a brief exercise. It concerned the reading of some words to Mitch and asking him to respond by sharing whatever word or phrase comes to his mind. Jung offers a set of words, including such words as "Leader," "Failure," "Enemy," "Success," "Friend," "Regret", "Vacation", "Stress", "Overwhelm" and "Re-newal." After presenting the words, Dr. Jung provided a brief report regarding his impressions of Mitch's reactions to some of the words on the list. Three words seem to have stood out as being particularly difficult for Mitch. It took longer for Mitch to respond, there were often several different responses to these words, and Mitch seems to exhibit some emotions when answering these three words. They were: (1) "overwhelm", (2) "friend" and (3) "regret."

Mitch indicated that all three of these words related to his deteriorating relationship with Frank. The word, "regret," was particularly stressful for Mitch. He felt a "lump in his throat" as he talked some more about how painful his shifting relationship with Frank has been. Dr. Jung asked Mitch what he "regreted." Mitch paused for a moment and then said: "I regret many things. I guess most important is my regret about so often getting mad at Frank. I know that I am deeply hurting his feelings. But our business does have to change!!" Dr. Jung speaks softly for several minutes about the powerful impact which regret has in our lives. He mentions that Regret is actually a stronger emotion and motivator than either the fear of loss or hope of success. Dr. Jung made a very powerful statement: "we would rather lose something than regret not even trying to be successful". Mitch thought that this statement would be worth pondering in coming days.

Dr. Jung closes the session by asking Mitch to do a bit of homework. He was to go on-line to [Jung Type Test](#) and complete an inventory that helps to identify personality types. These are the personality types that Dr.

Jung's uncle first identified. While his uncle always identified personality preferences by simply listening to his patients, there are now inventories that can be taken which speed up the process. Dr. Jung mentioned that there is one inventory that is most commonly used (created by a mother and daughter team, Katherine Briggs and Isabel Briggs-Myers), he prefers the online inventory that he has asked Mitch to complete.

The session ends. Mitch leaves, reflecting on the matter of "regret." He realizes that he has many other regrets that he didn't identify in this first session. Several of his regrets concern his wife. Dare he bring these into the session with Dr. Freud, given that Joan is also working with the good doctor?

Session Two

Upon entering Dr. Jung's office and settling into the comfortable chair, Mitch immediately indicated that there were several other regrets that he wanted to disclose. In several cases, these regrets seemed to contradict one another.

Regrets and Polarities

On the one hand, Mitch regrets that he has pushed hard on moving into the digital era of newspaper publications. On the other hand, he regrets not having moved to digital publication even earlier. Mitch feels like he is "catching up" with other newspaper publishers and, in particular, with those providing news purely in a digital format. He also feels like he is "betraying" his dear friend, Frank, and his initial commitment made 20 years ago with Frank to producing a high-quality print-based newspaper. He was one of the first to produce a newspaper that made extensive use of color graphics—yet now he is behind the times and betraying his friend and their shared commitment to quality.

Dr. Jung noted that regrets are often contradictory, for they are produced deep in our psyche and are highly irrational. They often represent powerful pulls in our unconscious life. In this case, there is a pull between friendship and commitment on the one hand, and good business practices and agility on the other hand. Dr. Jung indicates that this polarity and others Mitch might discover, can be the focus of future sessions. However, at this point, Dr. Jung would like to establish a broader "psychological foundation" by exploring Mitch's personality preferences.

Personality Types

Mitch indicates that he completed the inventory. Scores on the test he took indicated that he is an ENFP. That means that he is extraverted, intuitive, feeling-based and perceptive. Mitch looked at several descriptions of ENFP that he found on the Internet. They all seemed to emphasize the enthusiastic, creative and interpersonally oriented nature of this personality preference. ENFPs are attuned to abstract ideas, emotions, and imagination. At their best, these people form deep, authentic relationships with other people. Mitch immediately connected this personality type with his long-standing deep commitment to Frank, as well as his proclivity to remain creative and imaginative in his vision of an ever-updating newspaper enterprise: "No wonder I am conflicted. I have two competing goals that are fully embedded in what you [Dr. Jung] are calling my psyche!"

Dr. Jung nods and takes a few notes. He then asks Mitch if there is anything about the ENFP type that doesn't seem quite right. Mitch hesitated for a moment and then declared that he doesn't really feel very "extraverted." He is not always so interpersonally oriented: "Frank has been a good friend for many years; however, I don't have many other friends and the people I spend time with are inevitably related to my business. I don't even work with the Youth Athletic folks anymore."

“Like the INFPs, I often like solitude or evenings spent with my wife and children. For instance, Joan and I enjoyed this past weekend, just sailing on the lake and sitting on the deck looking at the nearby mountains. I also resemble the INFPs in that I am very private and reserved. I don’t easily share my feelings with other people. My conversations with you during these first two sessions are unique. This probably why my wife suggested I come here to Zurich to meet with you.”

Dr. Jung then noted that the shift between extraversion and introversion from one situation to another is not that unusual, especially for those in a leadership role. He mentioned that this shift often has to do with how other people in the organization that we lead see us. Our organization also has a culture that impacts on the way we see ourselves (and other people see us). He suggested that these important leadership dynamics can be the focus during one of our future sessions.

Dr. Jung then directed the conversation to the other personality preferences Mitch identified. The preference for intuition relates to an interest in ideas rather than facts, while the preference for feeling rather than thinking relates to the emphasis on values and commitments. While Dr. Jung’s uncle didn’t identify the fourth pairing (perceiving vs. judging), it now being commonly found in Jungian personality theory. Mitch’s openness to new ideas and desire to be agile in running his newspaper firm are indicative of his preference for perception of possibilities rather than rigid judgments about existing realities.

Dr. Jung mentioned that the INFP type is often referred to as the *Healer*—and Mitch might be trying to heal a wound in Frank that he had helped to create! Mitch might even find that he is bumping up against Frank’s judgmental rigidity, while aligning with the open, perceiving preference of Gwen, his strategic strategist. It will be tempting for Mitch to take sides against Frank. This could eventually be a source of regret for Mitch. Mitch softly states: “Hell, this might already be a source of regret . . .”

Dr. Jung closes the session by giving Mitch another homework assignment. Mitch is to take a few minutes and produce a list of words that he thinks employees in his newspaper organization would use to describe him, especially in his role as leader. Dr. Jung referred to his notes and remarked that Mitch indicated right off the bat during the first session that he wanted to be “more open and more relaxed as a leader.” Dr. Jung set down his pad of paper and asked Mitch: “Does this mean that people with whom you work would describe you as ‘closed’, ‘rigid’, or unwilling to entertain new ideas?” Mitch left with thoughts and feelings swirling around his head (and heart) regarding how other people view him:

. . . And how does Joan see me?” The descriptions of both ENFP and INFP refer to a preference for authentic relationships. Am I being authentic with other people, or am I just faking it? And do I really want to be more open and relaxed? Or is that just what the books on effective management are telling me? And what does it mean to be not just a good manager, but also a good leader? How is management different from leadership? A lot to consider . . . and both ENFP and INFP indicate that I like to be reflective about abstract ideas such as the difference between management and leadership. And here I am pondering this difference! Perhaps personality inventories do offer some insights. . . .

As Mitch enters the bustling streets of Zurich, he pauses and looks at the people passing by him. He wonders what their personality type might be.

Session Three

Mitch enters Dr. Jung’s office with a carefully and thoughtfully prepared list of words and phrases that he thinks other people in his organization would use to describe him. Mitch has created a bit in that he asked his wife to provide her own list of words that employees would use to describe him. Her list contained nothing but

positive attributes, while Mitch's list was full of negative attributes. He didn't tell Dr. Jung that Joan helped prepare the list that Mitch brought to this session with Dr. Jung.

How People See Me

Dr. Jung invited Mitch to read some of the words on his life. Before reading his list, Mitch mentioned that he had come up with several different lists (some including items from his wife's list). In completing the homework assignment, Mitch began to recognize that he is probably seen quite differently by employees in different divisions of his organization. While this is not a big organization (less than 50 employees), there are silos, with barriers in the communication between operations of his newspaper enterprise.

Mitch reads from the list that he thinks would be composed by members of the production unit (under Frank): "hard driving", "stubborn", "enamored with new technologies", "dedicated" (from his wife's list), and "committed to welfare of newspaper." He then turns to the list predicting how his Sales and Marketing employees would see him: "stressed", "bottom-line driven", "demanding", "visionary" (from his wife's list). The list for his editorial staff differs quite a bit from the other two: "supportive", "hands-off", "dedicated" and "clear vision" (from his wife's list). Member of the Finance Department would probably prepare a list, according to Mitch, that includes: "uninvolved", "numbers-phobic", "just-in-time review", and "vision-beyond-dollars" (from his wife's list: both positive and negative). Finally, there is the list prepared by his Strategic Planning team: "great collaborator", "open-minded", "careful-when-appropriate" and "innovative" (from his wife's list).

Multi-phrenia

Dr. Jung notes that these lists tend to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the ENFP and INFP personality types. The strategic planning folks appreciate his openness to new ideas, while the Production Department does not appreciate his love of new technologies. And the Finance department do not appreciate his apparent indifference to the facts (money/bottom line). The Sales and Marketing division see the more introverted side of Mitch, as a driven, bottom-line-driven person (just the opposite of how Finance sees him). The production division also see Mitch as hard-driving; however, they might, in addition, see Mitch as dedicated and committed as expressed in his hard-work and ultimate support for their work (perhaps more of an expression of Mitch's extraversion).

At this point, Dr. Jung pauses so that Mitch can absorb all (or at least some of) the insights being offered. Mitch shakes his head and declares: "No wonder I am lost when I comes to leading this damned organization!! I am a multi-headed "'monster' that is being feared in many ways." Dr. Jung breaks in: "You are also being loved and respected in many different ways." The challenge of leadership, Dr. Jung suggests, resides in an acceptance of this diversity of perspectives regarding oneself. "Ken Gergen is an author I appreciate. He writes about a psychological ailment that afflicts most of us in contemporary life. This ailment is "multi-phrenia." While "schizophrenia" refers to the splitting of self, multi-phrenia refers to holding onto many different selves. You are suffering from multi-phrenia. And there is no pill to be taken that cures this condition!"

Mitch sits quietly for several minutes. Dr. Jung then shifts his analysis to a deeper level:

Mitch, you have identified important attributes and behaviors that reside at the surface of our psyche—or more accurately as the surface of psyches among your employees. You don't know for sure that this is how other people see you; you are only able to infer what you think they are seeing and thinking. During one of our future sessions I would like us to consider how the culture and climate of your organization and the subunits of your organization are influencing perceptions of you.

Dr. Jung brings the session to a close by suggesting that Mitch reflect on the list he has offered and look for deeper patterns in how people in his organization see him.

Session Four

It has been raining all day in Zurich. When Mitch arrives at Dr. Jung's office, he is offered a steaming cup of strong Swiss coffee. While Mitch usually prefers tea, he accepts Dr. Jung's offer and sips on the cup of freshly brewed coffee. Before Mitch has a chance to share some of his ideas about the underlying patterns to be found on his list, Dr. Jung indicates that he wants to take Mitch on a psychological journey. And suggests that this journey will relate directly to the list Mitch has prepared and to patterns he might have discovered. Dr. Jung indicates that he is going to do a bit of lecturing during the coming hour, so hopes that the coffee will keep Mitch awake! They both laugh. Dr. Jung begins. . .

Psychic Theater

Dr. Jung indicates that he is about to shift the level of analysis:

At this point, I want to dig deeper into the perceptions you have identified. In many instance, the descriptions being offered represent just the tip of the iceberg. There are layers of representation, images and feelings that reside below the surface. They often have a powerful, unacknowledged impact on the way members of an organization relate to one another, and, in particular, to their leaders. One might even conceive of an unconscious theater operating in organization, with a wide variety of "actors" playing our important roles in this theater. Most importantly, members of the organization often do not realize that they have assigned roles in this theater to one another. An older gentleman in the organization is assigned the role of caring father. That long-suffering assistant to the president is assigned the role of nurturing mother.

Dr. Jung mentions that all of this occurs without much awareness on the part of any members of the organization. Furthermore, the assignment of roles is inevitably reinforcing and self-fulfilling. We ask the caring father to listen to our problems and he becomes truly caring. We expect our nurturing mother to provide us with sustenance (financial support, free time), making use of her informal authority to bend the rules. She becomes more nurturing and we turn to her that much more often.

Another factor is brought up by Dr. Jung while introducing the notion of a self-fulfilling psychic theater. He mentioned that this theater is particularly active when a high level of anxiety is operating in an organization. Roles become vivid and are actively played out and reinforced (self-fulfilling) when members of the organization feel the pressure to finish a project on time, when there is a major change operating in the organization, and when there is tension among key players in the organization. Dr. Jung turns to Mitch at this point and mentions his critical conflict with Frank. Dr. Jung also refers to several of the words and phrases that Mitch identified as possibility being assigned to him: hard-driving, stubborn, demanding. Dr. Jung offers a disturbing insight: "Under such conditions, the psychic theater is likely to be in full operation!"

Anima and Animus

At this point, Dr. Jung turns specifically to the wisdom offered by his uncle as well as other Jungians. He specifically identifies two "actors" that represent the male and female spirits: Anima and Animus. Dr. Jung indicates that the anima character in the psychic theater represents traditional aspects of the feminine: the emotional, empathic and reflective elements of the human psyche. Conversely, the animus represents traditional masculine elements such as reason, logic and action. As Dr. Jung notes, these do not represent actual feminine and masculine attributes. These actors represent symbolic patterns found in all societies.

Dr. Jung continues:

. . . the female energy and guidance were traditionally offered by the wife (or lover). For those men working in the arts there was the muse. In modern times, those men in leadership roles often relied on the female secretary for feminine energy and guidance: Now in the 21st century, I find woman who occupy an executive function. In my own work, I find that they often serve as head of HR (fulfilling a traditional nurturant role) or as head of a nonproduction unit of the organization. Such as that served by Gwen in your organization, Mitch.

Dr. Jung now pauses his lecturing and directs his attention to Mitch. He asks Mitch a question: “Do you enjoy any particular type of music?” Mitch responds: “Yes, I love Broadway musicals. My wife and I travel to Chicago twice a year to attend one of the touring Broadway musicals. In the evening, I often sit back, relax in a chair like I am sitting in now, and put on some old records or CDs.” Dr. Jung smiles and offers an interesting insight: “For men like you and me, our feminine animus often speaks to us through love songs, much as the masculine animus also speaks to women such as your wife and Gwen through songs conveying love. So, Mitch, do you have any favorite songs from Broadway musicals.”

Mitch has an immediate answer: “One of my favorite love songs is Roger and Hart’s “Nearer’. I also love Kern and Gershwin’s “Long ago and far away” which comes from a 1930s movie rather than Broadway show.” Dr. Jung smiles once again and offers an insight: “I am not fully aware of these songs; however, from the titles I surmise that the first song is telling you that your feminine anima is very close to you, while the second song is suggesting that your anima has ancient and ‘far away’ origins. In essence, these songs appeal directly to your heart. Your ‘lover’ resides inside of you rather than out there as a specific woman.”

Mitch is silent for a minute and then speaks with considerable emotion: “

Yes, these two songs and several others appeal directly to my emotional state. I particularly like to listen to them when Joan is present. I also always attend the theater productions with my wife. We are deeply bonded when listening to these songs and others that Joan particularly enjoys. . . . There is another song that touches me deeply. It is “Music of the Night” from Les Miserable.

Dr. Jung chimes in:

Yes, I know that song very well. It is all about the mystery swirling around the night when the music is being played. This song is an extraordinary representation of how the anima swirls around as a mystery in our own psychic theater.

Dr. Jung pauses at this point and then offers the following comment:

I have brought up this matter of music and the anima not to serve as a music critic, but rather to suggest that our relationship, as men, with women is often filled with the mysterious, near, but also ancient and far presence of the anima in these women. We fall in love with them, fall in awe with them, or simply are animated in working with them. We might not be working as an artist, but women can be our muses and can motivate us to creative and cutting-edge work.

Dr. Jung pauses once again, and expands on his comments regarding the pull of anima (and animus):

The term “resonance” is sometimes used to describe what is occurring. Just as two people can “fall in love” by finding that their emotions and thoughts are resonant with one another, so the anima and animus of two people can resonant, with the feminine anima of the man resonating with the masculine

animus of the woman. It is all unconscious, but very real in terms of the powerful emotions that are elicited.

Then, after another pause, Dr. Jung offers another comment:

There is another side to keep in mind. The resonance can lead us, as men, to misjudge the competence and intentions of a woman. We don't see the real women, but only the women enacting the role of anima in our psychic theater. . . . As a leader in an organization that is facing many challenges, you need to be particularly thoughtful (a masculine characteristic) in working relationship with women you admire and on whom you often depend.

Mitch immediately offers a reflection and question:

Perhaps, my pull toward Gwen is based in part on this anima factor. She is very competent and highly motivated to do great work. However, I also know, in all honesty, that I am a bit "in love" with her. I absolutely have done and will do nothing inappropriate but do know that I 'light up' when she enters the room—much as I 'light up' when my wife enters the room. Is this all wrong on my part? Should I not feel this way? After all, she is much younger than I am and I certainly have good reasons to value her judgment and her work. What should I do?

Dr. Jung walks over to the table, picks up the coffee carafe and refills Mitch's cup. He responds to Mitch's question:

Your feelings are totally appropriate. These feelings no doubt provide some additional energy for you when working with Gwen. She probably also feels something for you. The old-time psychoanalysts used the term, "sublimation" when describing how we convert unacceptable impulses into acceptable and productive energy. . . . It is just a matter of acknowledging to yourself that you have these feelings and that you might be viewing Gwen partly through the eyes of your unconscious psychic theater. You must be careful not to begin taking on the role of a character in this ongoing theatrical production. In short, you have to avoid being captured in the thralls of your anima and being driven by and enacting nothing but your own primitive, masculine animus.

Mitch reacts to Dr. Jung's statement:

Wow. That is quite a warning you are offering me. I will have to think long and hard about the way in which I interact with Gwen. I know my wife is a bit jealous regarding my relationship with Gwen. Perhaps she senses a bit of what I am feeling.

Dr. Jung offers a word of restraint:

I would not get too worried about your relationship with Gwen. For what you have told me up to this point, you are doing a fine job of bringing in Gwen's expertise regarding technology and strategic planning. . . . However, your strong pull toward Gwen might have an impact on your relationship with Frank.

At this point, Dr. Jung brings in the dynamics associated with the masculine animus as it operates in the psyche of men. Dr. Jung offers the following insight for Mitch to consider:

When it comes to your relationship with Frank, there is another powerful, often unconscious dynamic operating. When interacting with other men, we can often get a bit competitive with them. This is our animus in operation. While your relationship with Frank may have been forged on an anvil of mutual commitment that is heated by the animus operating in both of you, the relationship might also have

included some push on the part of both of you to somehow end up superior. On the positive side, this could mean coming up with a bright new idea, such as the use of robotics in the production of newspapers. On the negative side, this could produce envy and anger on the part of Frank if he sees you winning out in moving to a digital format for your newspaper. And being successful with the assistance of a woman only makes things worse.

Mitch is silent for a minute. He then speaks up:

You could be right about all of this crazy, primitive stuff happening in my relationship with Frank and Gwen. One of my favorite musicals is Lerner and Lowe's Camelot. There is an eventually strained relationship between King Arthur, Gwenevere and Lancelot. In this case, Gwenevere and Lancelot come together and leave Arthur alone. In my case, it is Frank who is left alone. . . .

Dr. Jung offers some encouragement:

Your use of Broadway Musicals is very appropriate. The anima and animus are often vividly on display in these musicals. That is why they are so popular even though unrealistic. No one breaks into song in the middle of a challenging situation. However, the song can represent deeply felt emotions, which are experienced in the middle of a challenging situation.

At this point, Dr. Jung suggests that they take a break for several minutes. He offers Mitch some more coffee; however, Mitch declines the offer, suggesting that a glass of water would be preferred. All the stress and insights of this session have made Mitch quite thirsty.

The Shadow

When Dr. Jung and Mitch settled back in their chair after the break, Dr. Jung brought up a new topic. He introduces the concept of Shadow:

The shadow was one of my uncle's favorite characters in the psychic theater. I think he liked the Shadow because, like the Shadow, my uncle was something of a trickster and troublemaker. He liked to stir things up and often wanted to appear mysterious and shadowy in his work with patients and in his writing—his writing is often hard to understand!

Dr. Jung then introduces the important role played in the psychic theater by the Shadow:

While our Shadow can mess with our mind and disrupt our behavior it can also correct our misguided behavior, especially when we are filled with hubris and walk around with a large, inflated ego. Under such conditions, the Shadow places a banana peel on the floor in front of us so that we slip and make a fool of ourselves. In our dreams, the Shadow will strip us of our clothes and leave us naked trying to impress a crowd of skeptics or a panel of critical judges.

At this point, Dr. Jung shifts his focus from the role of shadow in our personal psyche to the role of shadow in an organizational setting:

I want to return to the issues you are facing in your organization. It is important to note that the Shadow can be represented not just in our psychic theater, but also by a real person in an organizational setting. This the person, like my uncle, who stirs things up and like the judges in the dream who declares that the leader is naked and wrong! Similarly, there is the old tale of the child who declares that the emperor is naked. The Shadow function is served by this child – and by many children in our life.

After Dr. Jung has described the function served by the Shadow in an organization, Mitch remains silent for about a minute. He then conveys a story with some emotion in his voice:

My goodness. I must tell you about Horace, one of the key members of our production team, He is serving as a Shadow. He goes around pretending to be a robot that is making decisions about layoffs among members of the production team. Sometimes, he portrays me as a robot. Or he is acting as a robotic Gwen making these critical decisions. I hated the role that he is playing and have accused Frank of putting him up to this pointed criticism of the way things operate in this organization.

Frank is strongly urging me to break up Gwen's division. He thinks it is inappropriate for Gwen to oversee Human Resources while she is also in charge of Information Technology. This is where the Shadow role played by Horace comes in. Is it appropriate for someone handling a technology that could lead to employee layoffs be in charge of the layoff process. Frank is suggesting that one of the bright and ambitious members of Gwen's staff be made the head of HR, so that Gwen can concentrate on strategic planning and information technology. Perhaps, I should give this proposal greater consideration. I put all three functions together to save some money; however, this might not be a wise move, especially with the potentially greater role to be played by IT in the future of our company.

Dr. Jung comes in at this point:

Perhaps your assignment of Gwen to the role of HR director is, in part, influenced by the traditional role of woman as nurturer. You might want to ask yourself if Gwen is really suited to this role. She seems to be more interested in the technological and strategic sides of her job rather than the human side. It might be appropriate for you to consider breaking up this division.

Mitch is a bit surprised. This is the first time that Dr. Jung has made a specific suggestion regarding the operation of his organization. He feels a bit ambivalent regarding this "consultative" intervention.

Mitch's List of Deeper Patterns

Dr. Jung and Mitch conclude this fourth session by reviewing the revised list that Mitch prepared concerning patterns in the items he identified about how other people in his organization see him. Some of the items on this list of patterns align with several of the characters in Dr. Jung's psychic theater. Mitch finds that there is a pattern concerned with driving and demanding behavior—which seems to Mitch very much like his masculine animus. At the same time, other items seemed more closely aligned with his feminine anima: dedication and support. Mitch noted that many of the items on his list that seem feminine came from his wife: "Does she see something in me that members of my organization doesn't see?" Dr. Jung offers an alternative interpretation:

Perhaps there is something about your role in the organization that pulls for your masculine animus characteristics. Or does the culture of your organization pull for masculine animus characteristics in its leader? We will be considering this second possibility during one of our future sessions.

Dr. Jung also noted that the polarization identified in Session Four might be energized by the pull between the feminine anima and masculine animus that both appear in the role played out by Mitch in his organization. Mitch leaves this session with much to ponder regarding his role as leader of a stressful newspaper enterprise.

Session Five

Mitch enters this session with more questions than answers. He comments that some of the items on his original list and on his list of patterns don't fit with either masculine or feminine. Furthermore, none of the items (other than "innovator"—which not really be a shadow-based function in his organization). Mitch

indicates that he wonders why none of the items on his list relate to the Shadow. Dr. Jung mentions that the Shadow function in an organization is usually not served by the formal leader. Rather, it is served by the “loyal opposition” or by “outliers” or those who have left the organization (voluntarily or forced out). Dr. Jung notes that what is often “discarded” in an organization (the organization’s “garbage”) tells us, in a negative way, about the true values and priorities of the organization.

Dr. Jung then suggests that there are many more characters in the psychic theater. Some of these might be identified on Mitch’s list. It is at this point that Dr. Jung indicates he is moving beyond his traditional Jungian colleagues. Dr. Jung speaks of the roles played specifically by leaders of the psychic theater. These are the fictitious portraits of leaders who are very wise, leaders who are brave, and leaders offering a profound vision.:

All three of these portrayals are widely found in contemporary societies. In your country [USA], the wise leader is found in a wide variety of renditions ranging from Benjamin Franklyn to Albert Einstein and George Lucas’ Yoda. You Americans envision the leader of courage in George Washington, Rosa Parks and Stanley Kubrick’s Spartacus. Leadership of vision is portrayed in the lives of Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King and either Steve Jobs or Bill Gates (take your pick).

Dr. Jung asked Mitch to identify the role he is most likely to play at his newspaper enterprise. Has this role changed over time? Mitch paused for a moment and then indicated that he was originally a visionary leader:

Along with Frank I saw the need for a community-based newspaper in my community. I also envisioned this newspaper being politically neutral but strongly committed to matters of social justice and career opportunities for members of our community. I later envisioned providing similar services in two neighboring communities.

Mitch went on to suggest that the role he is now playing differs dramatically from that of the visionary. He is now much more the Wise leader. He is fully informed regarding all operations in his organization and has been through all the ups and downs of the news media trade. While he supported the innovations introduced by Frank in the use of robots for newspaper production and the innovations introduced by Gwen in the move to a digital newspaper, he considers these to be based on the visions of these two members of his organization. Mitch spoke hesitantly about the role he is now playing as a leader:

I am now the old guy who is sitting on the sidelines, encouraging other members of my team to push toward the goal line. Dr. Jung, I no longer look like any of the leaders you mentioned.

Mitch is asked by Dr. Jung to identify a real or fictitious leader whom he would like to use as a role model. Mitch immediately identified Atticus Finch, from the movie, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Dr. Jung asked why this admirable attorney is at the top of Mitch’s list. Mitch talked about the courage and ethics of Atticus, as well as his role as attentive father. Mitch pauses once again.

With a tear in his eye, Mitch mentioned that he did not feel that he had been a very attentive father. He had devoted much too much time to his business and often only found time to “play” with his two boys when they were involved with Frank’s own two boys. Mitch indicates that he would have been a worse father if it weren’t for Frank and his modeling of great fathering. Mitch paused for a moment and then muttered: “and that’s why I love Frank and can never forgive myself for causing him stress!”

Dr. Jung handed Mitch a tissue, then sat quietly with him for several minutes. Mitch spoke softly of the caring times he spent with Frank and his two boys, who were about the same age as Mitch’s two sons (who are now grown up and have left home). Mitch now spoke clearly and with full voice:

You know, maybe that is what's happening now with Frank. It might have more to do with our now-lost role as parents than with our business. Our four boys might have provided the glue that kept Frank and me together. That glue is gone now. . .

The hour session was drawing to a close. Dr. Jung gave Mitch a homework assignment:

Please write down any dreams you have during the next couple of nights. You have explored some important themes during this session and some commentary on these themes might show up in your upcoming dreams.

Mitch agreed to take some notes regarding his dreams. He thanked Dr. Jung for this remarkable session and left to walk slowly and reflectively in the continuing rain of Zurich. . .

Session Six

It was one of those clear and beautiful days in Zurich. The nearby hills and mountains were glimmering in the bright sunlight. Mitch was feeling "alive and well" as he entered Dr. Jung's office, with the written account of several dreams in hand. Dr. Jung also seemed to be in a good mood when he greeted Mitch and once again offered him a cup of Swiss coffee.

Dreams

Dr. Jung opened this session by asking Mitch about lingering concerns following their previous session and about any dreams that Mitch might have had. Mitch immediately pulled out one of his dreams. He read his copy of the transcript:

I was walking in a park here in Zurich and a bear appeared. I ran back to my home, which was my actual home in the United States. My parents were there and told me to hide away in one of the cupboards. They offered me some of your Swiss coffee and slipped it in to me as I curled up inside the cupboard. I heard the bear growling outside our home, which had become my childhood home rather than the home in which I now live with my wife. I was terrified but decided to confront the bear. I took out a poker from our fireplace and went outside to meet the bear. When I met the bear, I discovered that this was a circus bear. It began to dance in circles and invited me to dance with him (or her). I did so and soon find that my parents and my wife were watching the bear and I dance. And then I woke up.

Dr. Jung asked Mitch how he felt about this dream:

I first felt anxious and then relieved as I was recalling the dream. I eventually felt a bit stupid, having run away from the bear before finding out if it was intent on harming me.

Dr. Jung then asked Mitch what he thought the dream was "teaching him." Mitch was taken back a bit. He had expected the good doctor to ask him what the dream "means." Mitch reflected for several moments on the dream and then shared his thoughts:

I think the dream is teaching me that I should not anticipate bad things happening before checking them out first. The bears in my life might want to dance with me rather than eat me!

Both Mitch and Dr. Jung chuckled a bit at Mitch's turn of phrase. Dr. Jung mentioned that bears are commonly used in fairy tales to scare children and in adult myths to convey strength, courage and a posture of "don't mess with me"

So, Mitch, you had every reason to be a bit frightened of the bear when you confronted this beast in the park. It is interesting to note that you returned to your home, and it soon became your childhood home. This seems to suggest that your fear of the bear relates to a fear in your life that is quite childlike. You were also protected by your parents, rather than someone in your current life.

Mitch chimes in:

However, I was offered some of your Swiss coffee. The dream seems to be teaching me that I am safe exploring primitive fears in my life here in your office.

Dr. Jung then asks:

Do you believe this is an accurate assessment. Is this office a safe place for you to confront fears that are big, like the bear, and are primitive?

Mitch pauses for a moment:

Yes, I think this dream might have emerged from my thoughts during the day about our previous sessions. You have encouraged me to explore some pretty big and scary stuff regarding Frank and Gwen. I find myself thinking about how I can be a bit braver when confronting both of them with a caring attitude to bring some resolution to the tension the three of us are experiencing. I also should take seriously the potential to separate HR from Strategic Planning and IT.

Dr. Jung offers several insights:

It is interesting to consider the teaching function provided by dreams. They can provide guidance for us as we confront difficult issues. They can also “inoculate” us by portraying very scary situations that we are able successfully confront in the dream, thereby encouraging us to confront the challenge in the real world which is much less scary. We will be just facing another person rather than a bear or fearsome monster. These people in our life are just as frightened as we are. They are likely to view us as menacing bears, especially if we are in a leadership role.

Mitch asks a question:

So, you think members of my organization might see me as a strong, and potentially harmful bear?

Dr. Jung responds:

Hard to say. However, you might keep this possibility in mind when working with folks in your organization. Especially those who do not know you well and see you only from a distance. In general, the farther down an employee is on the organization chart, the more likely they are to let myths, assumptions, hopes and fears cloud their perception of their organization’s leader. This leader becomes very wise or very stupid, very brave or a coward, and a visionary or someone stuck in the past. It is often all good or all bad – what psychologists call “splitting,” especially when the organization is filled with a great deal of anxiety.

Mitch comes in:

Perhaps, like what occurred when our newspapers were receiving fewer advertising revenues and fewer subscriptions during COVID. I think people in my organization were likely to see me as the potential savior or somehow as that damned fool that got us into trouble in the first place. However, they were seeing me, I suspect that it was partially true but mostly inaccurate.

Dr. Jung:

Yes, that's probably the state of things: some validity and some distortion. Do you have a second dream to report?

Mitch picked up another of his transcripts:

It is a long one! I was journeying through a strange city and then through a village located by a large dam. I was joined on this journey by Frank (as a young man) and our four boys (who were still young). We were walking together through the city. It had grown dark and around each street corner there was a menacing group of men holding knives and pitch forks. We walked faster and faster and soon were running. I was holding my two sons and Frank was holding his. After several minutes, complete with racing up a dead-ended street and then threading our way back through the crowd of "hoodlums," we were transported magically from the city to a pleasant village. It looked like something out of an old Disney movie such as *Sleeping Beauty* or *Pinocchio*.

Everything seemed perfectly fine, until I noticed that there was a large crack located just outside the village. There was a crack in the dam and water was beginning to leak through the crack. I called out to Frank (who was breathing heavily and exhausted like me from carrying our boys to safety in the city). Frank and I both picked up our sons once again and began to run out of the village. Behind me, I saw the walls of the dam begin to break apart. A large volume of water was now plunging down the walls of the dam and moving toward the village and towards us. I woke up in a sweat. I didn't go back to sleep for another half hour, fearing that I would be returning to the flooded village.

Dr. Jung noted that was another frightening dream. But there was no dancing bear at the end of this dream. There was only potential destruction.

It was a very frightening dream. We thought we had escaped from the menacing city, but then, suddenly we were running for our life as the threat of drowning loomed. There seemed to be no ways that Frank and I could save our boys. Both Frank and I were exhausted and had run out of options for escape.

Dr. Jung offered a context for considering the lessons to be learned from this dream:

The theme of journey is common in both ancient and contemporary fairy tales, myths and narratives. *The Wizard of Oz* offers a prime example that comes from Hollywood, the myth-making capital of contemporary life. These journeys always involve multiple challenges and often require that a group of people rather than an individual face these challenges. Once again, think of Dorothy, the Scarecrow, Tin Man, Lion and even Toto.

We Jungians often link this journey to a process we call "individuation." It is on this journey that we begin to forge an individual identity, complete with our own hopes, fears, strengths and weaknesses. This journey of individuation might be portrayed in your dream.

Mitch responds:

Yeh, I could see that my dream might be teaching me something about myself. But what could this be?

Dr. Jung:

Well, we can look at the two different parts of the dream. In the first part, you are in a strange city and fear being attacked by shadowy figures. Could this relate to the way as founder and leader of your

newspaper, you are frequently facing novel challenges and are having to protect yourself and your company from threats that are not always clear.

Mitch:

Yeh, that could work. But what is the dream teaching me?

Dr. Jung:

Perhaps it is teaching you that the person you are can handle the novelty and ambiguity. If you are a person who can tolerate these challenges, then perhaps you can be effective in meeting the challenges associated with the novelty and ambiguity associated with not just finding a way to work effectively with both Frank and Gwen but also helping to discover how best to relate IT (and perhaps AI) to the traditional values and craftsmanship of the newspaper production business. Frank is with you in the city and is with you in protecting what is of greatest value (your sons). Perhaps, you can envision Frank as someone who will help you and Gwen with this integration of the old and the new, rather than being an adversary.

Mitch:

So, I can dance with Frank rather than fend off his attacks. I like this idea. However, what is my dream teaching me when we are in the village? . . . Let me try to do the work on this dream. Then I can ask you to lend a hand before I get washed away by the flood of water from the dam. So, first, the dream might be teaching me about my ability to discern potential troubles when other people seem blind to them. Others in the village should have been aware of the crack in the dam and should have either repaired the crack or left the village before the dam broke.

Frank and I are with our kids. We arrived in the village too late to be of any help. This suggests that part of my distinctive identity concerns the desire to provide a warning to my community before something disastrous occurs. I find that I am often frustrated that the message was given out too late or that other people in my community don't read our newspaper or ignore our message. . . .

I wonder if this relates to some of the problems I have had in recent years with members of my editorial staff. I am often a bit pushy when asking them to cover a specific story in greater depth or when a story is late in being reported. Sometimes, I want to save the world from the impending flood. Wow, I am being very melodramatic . . . but there are floods coming to my community and to the world in which we now live.

Dr. Jung offers a self-disclosure:

Sometimes I think I continue to live in Switzerland, like my uncle, because it seems to offer a bit of protection from our flooding world. I know that isn't based in reality. Just as your desire to save the world comes from the mythic realm of your unconscious. Both of us probably must watch for the flooding of our conscious life with these highly unrealistic beliefs and aspirations.

Mitch is touched by Dr. Jung's disclosure regarding his own mythic realm. Mitch is appreciating his time in Zurich and his brief trips with Joan to the magnificent mountainside of Switzerland. He understands why Dr. Jung would want to stay here in Zurich – with or without the influence of his mythic realm. . . .

Dr. Jung suggests that they take a short break. Mitch asks for another cup of Swiss coffee. While sipping on the coffee, Mitch recalls the image in his dream of the water pouring down on the village and his own racing with Frank and their boys for their lives. He shudders. It was a horrible dream.

Myths and Fantasies

When Mitch and Dr. Jung commence their work together, the good doctor offers several introductory comments:

We human beings seem to need not only what dreams teach us, but also what our society and culture teach us through our myths and collective fantasies. I already mentioned The Wizard of Oz; however, there are many other powerful narratives, ranging from King Arthur and his Round Table to Spiderman and his magical powers. There are mythical figures, like King Arthur, Superman and Superwoman, who are always powerful (or at least potentially powerful).

It is only a matter of revealing who they are, transitioning to this person, and engaging the enemy. Often this sense of “who they are” is a matter of discovery. Arthur pulled the sword out of the stone, Superman and Superwoman discovered their special powers during their youth. There is another set of mythic figures who are transformed from mere human beings to superheroes via some magical intervention, be it a spider bite, process of getting mad, or lightning bolt (“Shazam!”). So, who about you? How do you become a leader? Are you a transitional leader or a transformation leader?

Mitch responds:

That is a very interesting and challenging question. As a child, I was always attracted to Captain Marvel (“Shazam”) and Spiderman, because, like them, I didn’t feel I was any special let along super as a child. I needed something to transform me into a powerful person . . .and later into a successful leader. I still don’t quite believe that I am powerful. I keep thinking that I will be found out and will return to my status as a powerless child. I actually mourned the death of Captain Marvel when it was forced to close shop, only to be revised for my own children in recent years.

Dr. Jung offers a comment:

This sense of powerlessness as a child is very common and is the source of childhood trauma when a young person is facing a threat that they can’t handle, such as sexual abuse or physical punishment. Your sense of powerlessness was much more benign. And you had an active mythic life which enabled you to experience the transformational emergence of power and personal control. Then, many years later, you took the risk of starting a newspaper and had to hope that some magical power would be granted for you to operate this business successfully. Some of this power came from Frank. And you remain connected to him and grateful for his invaluable contribution. This makes it particularly hard for you to push against Frank at the present time.

Mitch begins to tear up. Dr. Jung once again offers Mitch a tissue. They both sat silently for several minutes. Then Mitch speaks:

Yes, I am very grateful for Frank’s contributions both when we were starting the newspaper and when we automated our printing process. The question remains, how do I remain grateful for Frank’s magical source of energy and vision, while also turning to Gwen for her energy and vision. How do I keep both remarkable people close to my heart?

Dr. Jung suggests that this the fundamental question to be addressed in their final sessions: “This is why you traveled 4,500 miles to meet with me here in Zurich.”

With this observation by Dr. Jung, our session came to a close. There was no homework. And no need for an assignment, since Mitch had much to ponder after leaving Dr. Jung’s office and joining Joan for an afternoon

of strolling through the streets of Zurich and purchasing some of the Swiss coffee that Dr. Jung serves in his office.

Session Seven

Mitch entered Dr. Jung's office with mild apprehension. The sessions have become increasingly challenging for him. They have been very beneficial, but also psychologically bruising for him. And since the last session, Mitch has been thinking (and feeling) long and hard about how to keep both Frank and Gwen "close to his heart." He knows that he will have to meet with them individually and together when he returns to the States. But what will he say and do?

Dr. Jung seems to have sensed Mitch's apprehension. He said to Mitch:

Today, I want to suggest that we focus not on you but rather on the organization that you lead. We have been spending a lot of time examining your psyche. It is now time to examine your organization. With your permission, I would like to attend to the culture and climate of your organization. Some of this examination might be new to you. Much as a fish doesn't realize it is swimming in water, most people don't recognize the nature and dynamics of the culture and climate in their organization. As a leader of your newspaper enterprise, it is particularly important that you appreciate the water in which you are swimming, for it impacts on how you lead and the way in which you and others in your organization perceive your role as leader. So, can we shift our attention to the water?

Mitch eagerly agreed to this shift in focus—perhaps a bit too eagerly. Dr. Jung indicates that there will be a return to Mitch's personal psyche by the end of this session. But there first will be an examination of Mitch's organization.

Personality and Organizational Culture

Dr. Jung pauses for a moment and then offers some tentative observations:

I want to bring in my uncle's personality types once again. Much as personality type or character helps to define what is unique about a person's perceptions and actions, so the culture of an organization defines the unique way in which members of the organization are inclined to see and act in the world. If we consider your own organization, which is in the business of gathering and reporting on the news, then we might easily conclude that those working in your organization are being asked to be anchored in the facts, to be rational in their assessment of what is happening in the world, and nonpartisan in their reporting and analysis of the news. This would suggest that the culture of your organization would be inclined toward sensing rather than intuition, thinking rather than feeling, and perceiving rather than judging. Overall, the culture of your organization would be extraverted rather than introverted in that your newspaper is intended as an active agent in your community. When you put all this together, you end up with an ESTP culture. Does this initial analysis make some sense?

Mitch immediately responds:

Yes, but there are many members of my organization – including me—who have quite different personality profiles. We don't seem to fit with this ESTP culture.

Dr. Jung comments:

Of course there are major individual personality differences in your organization. However, the culture of the organization tends to be influenced by many factors other than its employees.

Mitch responds to what Dr. Jung has just said:

OK. I think you are right about the way newspapers are supposed to be fact-based, rational and nonpartisan, but this is not the case in 21st century journalism. And many of the operations in an organization such as mine do not involve collecting or reporting the news.

Dr. Jung:

You have made a couple of good points. First, an organization might be at least temporarily operating outside of their cultural type. This will often create tension in the organization. I suspect this is the case with many American newspapers. I suspect that the push in the United States toward alternative realities, an emphasis on promoting one political agenda, and the ownership of newspapers by someone with a specific politically driven bias, makes the operations of a newspaper quite difficult.

Mitch:

You got that right!! It is virtually impossible to keep neutral and grounded in reality when running a newspaper these days. Even though I might personally wish our newspaper to remain neutral in our community, I know that newspapers only sell these days if they offer a compelling, partisan narrative. This is especially the case with the competition offered by social media. It is not just print that is old fashion. The world of reality and thoughtful, balanced reporting is no longer in vogue.

Dr. Jung:

There is also the matter of units in your organization that do not gather or report the news. What we know about the culture in most organizations is that the primary product or service delivered by this organization tends to determine its culture. In a healthcare system it is the nature and dynamics of the healthcare services being delivered that defines its culture, just as the delivery of learning provides the culture of an educational institution.

Mitch:

You mentioned the tension that tends to exist in an organization like the one I am leading. How is this tension manifest in an organization like mine?

Dr. Jung:

The tension usually shows up as collective anxiety or what we shrinks call the Angst in an organization. People are short with one another; conflicts tend to erupt; polarities appear; there frequently is a high level of absenteeism, and a low level of overall morale. And ironically, when anxiety pervades an organization, its culture becomes even more powerful. Members of the organization look for some reason why they are anxious and the distorted images and explanations provided by the culture help to contain or buffer the anxiety.

Mitch:

There certainly is a lot of tension and anxiety in my organization . . . Could my strained relationship with Frank be determined in part by the anxiety that I know occurs in my newspaper enterprise?

Dr. Jung:

Yes, the tension and anxiety in our organization could exacerbate the tension in your relationship with Frank. You are also likely to find a level of antipathy between those outside the newsroom to those

inside the newsroom who are reporting the news. Those working the press or selling the ads have their own political biases and want these biases to be present in the newspapers they are producing or marketing. ESTP is being challenged from all sides, and you as the leader must deal with this challenge on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, as a leader who often most interpret and buffer the anxiety alongside the culture.

Mitch:

So, we are back to me and my struggles as a leader of Western Times Press.

Dr. Jung agreed that the focus is again on Mitch. He suggested that they take a short break before returning to Mitch's role as a challenged leader.

Organizational Climate and Leadership

When Mitch and Dr. Jung came back together, after Mitch (and Dr. Jung) consumed some of the Swiss coffee, Dr. Jung offered an important distinction:

We have been looking at the culture of your organization. As I mentioned, this is equivalent to the personality or character of an individual. The culture of an organization is not easily changed, much as personality remains immune to change. It often takes a lobotomy or very heavy drug to change personality. Similarly, it takes a massive intrusion in the life of an organization to change its culture. This intrusion might be the sale of the organization to a quite different owner or abandonment of the organization's primary product or service.

Mitch interrupts:

I am committed to remaining the owner of Western Times Press and to the delivery of news. I guess this means that our culture is unlikely to change. However, there could be some major changes and the potential of cultural change when I retire or die. This is a matter of succession planning, which is something I am not ready to discuss while here in Zurich.

Dr. Jung:

Yes, let's stay focused on the present time. I mentioned that culture is not easy to change. However, an organization also has a climate which changes from day to day, much like one's personal mood, unlike one's personality, is quite variable. Both climate and mood can be altered by immediate success or failure. The stories being told and realities being created about what is happening from moment to moment in the organization can not only change the mood of people working in the organization but also change the organization's climate.

Mitch:

It's interesting. I came to our session today holding onto a mood of apprehension. By contrast, I have often come to session with a quite upbeat mood—especially when the sun is shining in Zurich and I have had a wonderful Swiss breakfast with my wife.

Dr. Jung

And I have often adjusted the focus of our session, depending on what I perceive to be your mood. And I'm sure that my own mood will influence the direction we take, even though we therapists are always supposed to be neutral and client focused. Much like newspapers, the therapy office is supposed

to be ESTP. When my mood or the mood of my client doesn't fit with this cultural proclivity, then there can be tension in the therapy office just as there is in the newsroom and press room.

Mitch:

So, what should I do as a leader to influence the climate of my organization?

Dr. Jung

Rather than offering my suggestions, let's take a bit of an appreciative approach. Why don't you tell me about moments in our organization during the past three months when you have had a positive impact on the Western Times organization.

Mitch:

Interesting assignment. Let me think for a minute . . . Well, there was the time last month when I brought together the employees in the press room to commend their record of continual press runs without any delays or glitches. With all the color added to our newspapers during the past year, the alignment and consistency of the color mixtures is especially critical. This was also a moment when Frank and I were feeling good about one another. It was like the good old days. Our two families had dinner together that night. Our wives spontaneously planned this event after they both found out about the success of my meeting with those in the press room.

Dr. Jung:

This positive event might point the way to a reconciling of you and Frank. Is there another positive instance when the climate and mood change as a result of your intervention?

Mitch paused for a moment. He took a sip of coffee, looked out the window at the newly emerging Zurich sun, and offered a second appreciative example:

I had productive joint meeting with our editorial staff and with Gwen and her team. We were addressing a very difficult issue regarding the matter of copyrights for material we are taking from the Internet and are modifying to fit with the style and community focus of our newspaper. At what point does the modified copy become our property and no longer governed by the copyright held by the Internet source. At what point do we no longer acknowledge the Internet source when preparing an article and when do we continue to acknowledge. There was considerable disagreement in the room. This is a very difficult issue. The room was filled with what you are calling collective angst.

My employees became quite nasty with one another. I stepped in to serve as the buffer you mentioned a few minutes ago. I went over to our flip chart and listed the strengths of one position regarding the copyright. I then tore this page off the flip chart and taped it on the wall. My next step was to prepare a second list containing strengths associated with the second position. I taped this list to the wall. I then led a discussion that focused on clarifying and amplifying both sets of strengths.

My next step was to prepare a list of negatives regarding the first position, followed by the negatives of the second position. We talked about both sets of negatives. And then went back to the positives, identifying ways in which the positives can be used to overcome the negatives. The dialogue that was produced ended up being quite productive. We produced a thoughtful policy that I then passed by our lawyer for final approval. I really felt good about the role I played and about my focus on strengths before moving to the negatives.

Dr. Jung responds:

That is a wonderful example of how you can facilitate a change in climate by taking a positive approach when approaching a problem. You don't ignore the negative side but first clear the way for full appreciation for the strengths associated with each position in a contentious situation. By using the flip chart and listing the strengths and then the weakness, you provided some emotional distance that enabled everyone to be a bit more thoughtful and less polarized in addressing the issue at hand.

Mitch:

Somehow, I need to do something like this when meeting with Frank and Gwen. I need to identify ways I greatly appreciate how both have contributed invaluable to our organization. I need to do this identification with both being present. I then need to acknowledge and list on a flipchart the struggles I am having with both of my co-leaders. This includes identifying how I have contributed to these struggles. This could yield a constructive dialogue in which all three of us are involved in figuring out what is happening and how our strengths could be more frequently engaged, especially when things are tense and anxiety-filled in our organization. Dr. Jung, does this make sense?

Dr. Jung pauses for a moment, then speaks:

You know, Mitch, it is not me to determine what will and won't work for you in your organization. I only know of your organization through what you have said about it. However, you have just offered an example of working effectively in your organization. If this narrative of success is accurate and not distorted by the intervention of your own psychic theater, then I think you have identified a strategy and process that might be of great value to you. I would suggest that you envision the use of a similar set of actions operating with both Frank and Gwen being present. As you have done during the meeting on copyrights, you might consider several different approaches in meeting with your two co-leaders and then list the strengths associated with each approach, following by the negative downsides of each approach.

Mitch:

Yes, thank you. I think I am halfway on my journey to Zurich when it comes to finding a way to share with Frank and Gwen my devotion to both, and my desire to improve the way in which the three of us work together.

Dr. Jung and Mitch conclude their seventh session. Mitch's mood has changes – as has Dr. Jung's mood.

Session Eight

Mitch and Joan decided that it was time to travel back to their home in the United States. Both Mitch and Joan had found their work with Dr. Jung and his staff to be of great benefit. However, they were both getting a bit homesick, and Mitch was anxious to get back to his business. He wants to apply some of what he has learned in Zurich in his work with all his employees, especially Frank and Gwen.

Mitch is a bit hesitant about informing Dr. Jung of his decision, though Joan would have already met with Dr. Jung and would have informed him of their desire to return to their home.

Mitch enters Dr. Jung's office and is immediately greeted by Dr. Jung's handshake and declaration:

I am delighted that you and Joan are on your way back to the States. I think my work with you is just about done and you are certainly ready to get things right with Frank and Gwen. So, let's use this final

session to wrap things up. However, I first want to present you with one other insight that you might find a bit odd. It is one of my uncle's most controversial concepts. It is something called synchronicity and it involves the connection between events that don't seem to be causally related. So, are you ready for a bit of head-spinning?

Mitch is taken back a bit but readily agrees to some head-spinning.

Synchronicity

Dr. Jung begins:

Let's start with your decision to come to Zurich. It was because your wife was already here working with me. Somehow, it seemed quite timely, given that you were beginning to recognize the need to do something different with Frank. Was it just an accident that you arrived here with a pressing agenda to be addressed? Your meetings with me were not "caused" by your desire specifically to work with me; rather, they were caused by your wife's presence here in Zurich, meeting with me and members of my staff. Yet, somehow, were you meant to join with me so that you might address your work-related issues. This is what's called synchronicity. Some things seem to be occurring in our life that benefit us yet have no obvious cause.

Mitch interrupts:

I wonder if in some way, my wife's decision to come here to Zurich was based in part on an unconscious desire for me, her husband, to get some assistance.

Dr. Jung:

Yes, that could be the case. However, Joan knew nothing about the work I do as an executive coach and actually knew very little about Jungian psychology. Apparently, she read about it in a book she read about my uncle. And, she admitted to me, that she also wanted to spend some time in Switzerland. She had been here as a child with her parents. And always wanted to return.

Mitch:

You are probably right. Joan has long talked about visiting the mountains and lakes of Switzerland. Watching *The Sound of Music* many times didn't help!

Both Dr. Jung and Mitch chuckled a bit. Then Dr. Jung said a bit more about synchronicity:

Events such as your decision to come to Zurich often seem to be random or casual. Yet at some level they seem to be purposeful. I often think of the Gods on Olympus directing our lives. These mythic figures somehow manipulate the world so that each of us finds ourselves in a place and time when we learned something important about ourselves or find guidance in solving a pressing problem. I know that I never intended to follow in my uncle's footsteps. Instead, after graduating from college, I attended business school and began work in a Zurich high tech company.

However, I didn't find this to be satisfying, so I decided to attend medical school. While working on my Medical Degree, I did a rotation at a clinic where one of my uncle's students was providing clinical services. I worked with her for a short while and was absolutely enthralled with the process of Jungian therapy. I decided that I wanted to become a psychotherapist; however, I also wanted to make use of my brief business background to engage in this newly emerging field called executive coaching. So here

we are, you and I, addressing a problem located in a newspaper organization more than 4,000 miles from Zurich.

Mitch appreciated this brief disclosure by Dr. Jung regarding his own background and what led him to become a psychotherapist and executive coach. Mitch indicated that he was particularly impressed with Dr. Jung's brief background in business:

I suspect this is something that your uncle didn't have.

Dr. Jung smiled:

Yes, my uncle was many things and studied in many fields; however, he never attended business school. Nevertheless, he had valuable things to say about life in an organization and his concept of synchronicity speaks directly to the way in which business leaders seek to identify the cause of everything and are often frustrated when there seems to be no cause.

Mitch leaned forward in his chair. This was going to be an interesting topic.

Lessons from Olympus

Dr. Jung:

That is part of the reason why I often just turn to the metaphor of the Gods on Olympus causing all sorts of things. For instances, I might ask you what you think the Gods on Olympus were planning for you when you traveled here to Zurich. What do you think these Gods wanted you to learn?

Mitch:

Well, these Gods certainly wanted me to probe deeper into my long-standing relationship with Frank. I think they want me to heal this relationship on behalf of my own heart and soul, as well as the operations of my organization. I also think they wanted me to better understand my relationship with Gwen, and the way other members of my newspaper enterprise contribute to the overall welfare of this enterprise by stirring things up and by taking risks in proposing new ways of operating this enterprise. The Gods want me to know that there many sources of innovation in Western Times Press. I should more fully appreciate these sources.

Dr. Jung:

I am thankful for guidance offered by these Gods, even if they only exist in your head and heart. I think you are remarkably attuned to the lessons offered by the Olympians and are certainly ready to return to your newspaper with new perspectives and potentially new ways of working with your fellow employees.

Mitch:

And I think you have something to say about what has taken place here in Zurich. When I look for causes, I certainly can point to you, along with the somewhat random decision to join my wife here in Zurich.

Dr. Jung:

Speaking of your wonderful wife, I have given her two books that I think enable her to successfully continue her own journey. These are books called "She" and "We" by Robert Johnson, a Jungian like

me. I also want to give you a book. It is the third in Johnson's trilogy. It is called "He". While you and I didn't talk much about your relationship with Joan—it would not have been appropriate since I was working with her—I want you to know that this relationship is very important not only for your own psychological health and wellbeing, but also for your organization. It is remarkable to witness the powerful role played by marriage relationships in the capacity of an organizational leader to be effective. I find that a strong, nurturing and supportive marital relationship is often critical to the successful transition of a leader to new ways of being in their organization.

Dr. Jung hands Mitch a copy of Johnson's slim book on the Male psyche. Mitch expresses his appreciation:

Thank you, Dr. Jung, for everything, including your work with Joan. I think this will have to be a short session, since I must pack everything today for our flight back to the States early tomorrow morning. If they haven't already done so, I think the Gods on Olympus should appoint you as an honorary God!!

Dr. Jung smiles:

I would appreciate it if you offered your support for my nomination the next time you are talking to the Gods. Meanwhile, I wish you and Joan a safe trip back to America.

Mitch and Dr. Jung briefly hug and Mitch leaves the office, filled with a mixture of many emotions, ranging from gratitude and resolve to a deep loving appreciation for the work which was done with the good doctor.

Jung's Perspectives and Practices: An Expanding Analysis

We leave Mitch, as he and Joan prepare to travel back to the United States, having benefited greatly from their work with Kurt Jung. I wish to offer some of my own reflections on the work that Dr. Jung has done. In this hypothetical interaction between Mitch and Dr. Jung, I have tried to present ways in which Jungian perspectives and practices might be applied in the domain of executive coaching. I now offer some of the original ideas that guided my preparation for this hypothetical interaction. In several instances, I turn to the words written by Carl Jung himself (who didn't have a nephew called Kurt as far as I know!)

Personality Types and Organizational Climates and Cultures

Kurt Jung's uncle made a major contribution regarding our appreciation of differences between people. Carl Jung was one of the first to identify specific personality types. The terms "extraversion" and "introversion" have become particularly popular. Since the time that Carl Jung wrote *Personality Types* (Jung, 1971), a popular test (MBTI) has been created that measures the types presented by Jung (along with two personality preferences that Jung did not present).

While Kurt Jung appreciates the attention which the MBTI has brought to his uncle's original concept of personality type, Kurt (like his uncle and most Jungians) prefers to identify the personality types of his clients by talking with them about the preferences and actions they have taken in their life. In working with Mitch Lauridsen, Kurt did use results from a test that Mitch took online but checked with Mitch to see if the type identified by the test was accurate. I suspect that Kurt Jung would have also been checking during his session with Mitch to see if the test-generated typology was holding up.

Types of Leadership

In addition to personality types, psychologists and others in the human relations and organizational consulting and coaching fields, have a strong proclivity to identify different types of leadership. One of the simplest yet

insight-producing was offered by Wilfred Bion (1961) who wrote about the wise, courageous and visionary leader. I provided this typology to Kurt Jung's in his work with Mitch.

It is important to note that each of these three forms of leadership requires a certain condition of the organization or society in which they are operating. The wise leader is only effective if those in the system where they are operating remain "less smart" than their leader. When those working in Mitch's newspaper enterprise become most knowledgeable than Mitch—especially regarding innovative practices (such as the use of AI), then Mitch will have to switch from being the wise leader.

The courageous leader will only remain "in charge" when there is a perceived enemy. The potential for invasion or loss is required. For Mitch, the "enemy" could have been competing newspapers, other media or simply the threat of AI. Mitch never seemed to be particularly aligned with this second type of leadership, though there were probably sufficient threats in the world of newspaper production to justify this type of leadership.

As is the case with many founders of organization, Mitch Lauridsen was initially a visionary leader. He also followed the road of many other founders in becoming less of a visionary as the organization became more mature and stable. Mitch became the wise leader with plenty of stories to share about the founding of the organization.

In becoming a guardian rather than creator, Mitch would have experienced a sense of loss and transition. The founding stories eventually appear to be dated and no longer relevant. There would have then been a second transition, when Mitch no longer possessed the greatest amount of knowledge about his business. Another sense of loss and transition would have to occur. Mitch was probably at this point in his life as leader of Western Times Press, though this issue was not immediately addressed in his sessions with Dr. Jung. Perhaps, he returns to Zurich in another year or two.

Psychic Theater

I have provided Kurt Jung with a unique concept (psychic theater) that captures the many roles played by unconscious characters in Jungian psychology. In the hypothetical sessions with Mitch Laurdson, Kurt Jung is relying on the traditional distinctions between masculine and feminine that have existed in many cultures for many centuries. However, in the 21st Century, we are finding not only wider acceptance of same sex preferences, but also a shattering in the youth culture of the basic distinction between male and female. I suspect that alternative concepts of masculine and feminine will emerge in Jungian psychology.

The concept of shadow, however, is likely to not only remain nonyielding in Jungian psychology but also become even more relevant given the polarization and seeming presence of "evil" forces in contemporary societies. A related Jungian concept might also become more relevant: "the brighter the light, the deeper the shadow." It might have been some of the major advances ("bright light") in our understanding of and support for differences in human behavior that has arisen since World War II has produced a "backlash" ("shadow") regarding hatred of people who are different from ourselves. The emergence of freedom ("bright light") in many societies during the past half century may also have produced a desire ("shadow") to escape the responsibilities of this freedom (Bergquist, Weitz and Pomerantz, 2026).

Dreams

Kurt Jung was not alone in using dreams in his work as an executive coach. Dreams have been used by Deirdre Barrett in her work with organizational leaders (Barrett, 2001). Barrett writes about the Committee of Dreams:

For centuries, creativity was seen as beyond man, a gift from the gods. . . . Freud's emphasis on dreaming as "the royal road to the unconscious" brought it into this same realm. Dreams typically play

[the role of “inspiration.”] . . . Any break from concentrated problem solving may allow a misleading assumption to dissipate. But the sleeping mind abandons conventional logic most completely to pursue novel approaches. How does the Committee do this? Neurology suggests that dreaming is simply the mind thinking in a different biochemical model. [Barrett, 2001, p. 184]

We see in Mitch’s two dreams the operation of several important dynamics. First, the dream can make use of insight-filled metaphors (such as journey). Second, the dream can challenge and provide new understanding of our interpersonal relationships (Fromm, 1951). Third, we find the process of “inoculation” operating in many dreams. A threatening force or intrusive event occurs in the dream, yet we survive this force or event and are “fortified” to confront a similar force or event in our waking life. Each of these capacities of a dream can lead to new thoughts and directions in confronting daily problems. Dreams can even be engaged to address fundamental “focal problems” in our life (French and Fromm, 1964).

Change

Kurt Jung brought up an important concept during one of the final sessions with Mitch Lauridsen. This concept concerned the distinction to be drawn between two forms of change: Transitional and transformational. Transitional change refers to multiple alterations that take place over time. In many cases, transitional changes are not even noticed, until someone arrives on the scene who has not witnessed what has been occurring on a daily basis. We see this occurring when people who haven’t been seen for a while, comment on the major changes in the physical appearance of our growing child. We also see transitions operating in the famed case of the frog who fails to jump out of the pot of water that is gradually heating. The frog is cooked, just as many other gradual transitions eventually lead to an untenable condition that can’t be altered (“it’s too late”).

By contrast, a transformational change is dramatic, fully recognized and a source of important outcomes. At the personal level, transformation is often identified as a “conversion” experience or a condition of “twice born” (James, 1900/1982). At an organization level, the transformation is often identified as “paradigm-shifting” (Meadows, 2025), while at a societal level, it is called a “revolution.” (Kuhn, 2012). We even find the engagement of mini-transformations in temporary settings, such as carnivals, retreats and psychotherapy offices (Miles, 1964) In many ways, Mitch’s work with Kurt Jung could be considered a mini-transformation occurring in the temporary setting of Kurt Jung’s Zurich office.

Then there is the matter of Mitch’s leadership style. Is he a transitional leader or a transformational leader. This important distinction, first drawn by James McGregor Burns (1979) sets the role of transformational leader as inspiring, visionary and goal-oriented against the role of transitional leader as stabilizing, clarifying and supporting. It seems that Mitch first served as a visionary transformational leader when founding his newspaper, but has been serving more as a wise, stabilizing transitional leader as his enterprise has moved through several challenging periods. It is interesting that his dream seems to be encouraging transformation.

Organizational Culture

It is in the interplay between Mitch’s personality and the culture of his organization that I have moved Kurt Jung beyond the traditional confines of Jungian theory. However, my expansion of Jungian theory seems completely appropriate given the role played by sensing, intuition, thinking, feeling, perceiving and judging in organizations. It is not hard to imagine that there are collective preferences in organizations just as there are among the individuals working in the organization. I am not alone in this expansion of Jungian theory. William Bridges (1990) also argues that organizations, like individuals, have a “character” shaped by the dominant

personality types of their members. This organizational character influences how the group thinks, behaves, and responds to change.

In this hypothetical case study, I have imagined what the organizational culture of Mitch's newspaper enterprise would be and what the struggles might be—just as they are in many media-based enterprises that are pulled between providing facts and offering a compelling story (D'Agata and Fingal, 2012). There is also the potential pull between the preferences of an organizational leader and the culture in which this leader must “swim.” There is also the matter of the way a leader is perceived by others working in their organization, as their perception is influenced by the culture of their organization. Kurt Jung was particularly focused on this interpersonal influence in his work with Mitch.

There is also the role played by anxiety and collective angst in an organization. Kurt Jung focuses on this role when working with Mitch. He brings up the matter of Mitch's relationship with Frank, suggesting that the overall level of anxiety in Mitch's organization might be exacerbating the tension between Mitch and Frank.

Many years ago, Isabel Menzies Lyth (1988) drew attention to the interplay between organizational anxiety and culture. She proposed that an organization's culture is likely to be particularly strong when levels of anxiety are high (as they often were in the hospital she was studying). Culture is engaged to explain or justify the anxiety. Or it is engaged to somehow dampen the anxiety. We can imagine that Western Times Press' ESTP or its potentially counter-culture (maybe INFJ, its shadow) is fully engaged when this enterprise is filled with anxiety-producing challenges or transitions.

Synchronicity and Executive Decision-Making

Finally, we turn to one of Carl Jung's most controversial concepts: synchronicity. As proposed by Kurt Jung to Mitch Lauridsen, perceptible events may be linked together imperceptible. An “acausal” connection is established between two or more entities. Meaning and purpose are to be discovered among a variety of entities that seem unrelated to one another. At first glance, their relationship seems circumstantial. Or it is found only in the mind and heart of the observing person. However, with further exploration, there is something that ties the events together—and important guidance can be found in this exploration.

According to Jung (1960, p. 25), synchronicity “means the simultaneous occurrence of a certain psychic state with one or more external events which appear as meaningful parallels to the momentary subjective state.” The key point in this statement is that Jung finds the unifying force (the “glue”) which brings and holds external events together is to be found not in their causal relationship, but instead in one's internal psychic state.

A noted Jungian, Ira Progoff (1973, pp. 13-14) has drawn an important distinction:

... Jung's work ... enables him to deal with “psychological facts” without making them “nothing but” psychological. There is a dimension of human experience that is not external to us in the sense that it can be directly and tangibly grasped. Rather, it is within us, but the word *within* must also be understood metaphorically. It reflects a depth in us as human beings and also depth of the universe. Perceiving one, we perceive the other. But we cannot do so directly, as we would in laying our hands on something and grasping it. We can only do so indirectly, or symbolically.

Findings from the physical sciences leading to the formulation of Quantum Theory have been identified by some Jungians and non-Jungians as justification for synchronicity since the causal relationship between particles and waves is often indefinite or even simultaneous. At an extreme, Quantum Theory has even produced a bio-centric view of the world that is solipsistic, meaning that the world is constantly being recreated by us with acausal or simultaneously generated relationships being created between images and events (Lanza, 2010).

Soft and Hard Synchronicity

I want to “soften” Kurt Jung’s concept of synchronicity by suggesting that there is both soft synchronicity and hard synchronicity.

Weak and Strong Synchronicity: I would also suggest another addition to (or perhaps modification) of Jung’s concept of synchronicity. I would differentiate between what I would call Weak Synchronicity and Strong Synchronicity. The weak form is manifest in the way we are attuned to specific events in our world because of the dynamics occurring in our psyche. There is the sparkle that we experience when some object or person in our outside world aligns with something that we are dwelling on inside ourselves.

For instance, Lewis, Amini, and Lannon (2000) write about the limbic resonance (emotional attunement) that occurs when we are drawn to another person. Several events might be tied together because they similarly resonate. They make us feel honored, hopeful, or loved. Or, on a more negative side, they produce similar fear or sense of hopelessness or helplessness.

These weak connections can be strengthened if they frequently recur. While there might not be any causal connection between these events, they may have a long, well-established psychic connection based in part on their ongoing association with specific schema (Paul, 1966; Bartlett, 1995) such as a place of sanctuary and safety, or a pathway to success. The schema might, in turn, be affiliated with a specific archetype, thus giving it additional emotional charge and making the weak synchronicity that much more impactful (perhaps becoming a strong form of synchronicity).

While the Weak form of synchronicity can usually be captured with psychological terms such as limbic resonance and schemata, the Strong form of synchronicity holds a transcendent meaning that is definitely related to a specific archetype, as well as being expanded and reinforced by other elements (such as anima and animus) in the human psyche. Jung identifies several internal psychic structures as critical to many synchronistic occurrences. The archetype which I have mentioned often in this essay is frequently the meeting ground for several, seemingly independent events.

According to Carl Jung (1960, p. 20):

. . . archetypes are formal factors responsible for the organization of unconscious psychic processes: they are “patterns of behavior.” At the same time they have a “specific charge” and develop numinous effects which express themselves as affects. . . [C]ertain phenomena of simultaneity or synchronicity seem to be bound up with archetypes.

Thus, we see in the conceptions of Carl Jung the synthesizing of numinous, patterns (fractals), and synchronicity.

Going a Bit Mad: Regression in the Service of the Ego

I also want to gently introduce Carl Jung’s experience of madness and propose that Mitch Lauridsen himself experienced a bit of madness. It all begins with the work done by Carl Jung between 1914 and 1930, following his intense period of self-experimentation from 1913 to 1916 known as his “confrontation with the unconscious.” (Bair, 2003) At his home in Küsnacht, near Zurich, Carl Jung would do his professional work in the morning and then turn a bit “mad” in the afternoon, carving stone sculptures, drawing intricate paintings (often mandalas) and writing down his creative and often quite aberrant thoughts in a notebook that became his *Red Book* (Jung, 2009).

While it is disturbing to conceive of a noted physician and psychotherapist like Carl Jung seeming to “lose his senses” part of the day, while serving as a guide to “sanity” for patients in the morning, it is also to Jung’s credit that he was able to manage this remarkable transformative process throughout this highly productive period in his life. While Jung identifies this as his confrontation with the unconscious, other psychoanalytically inclined theorists have used a phrase to describe not only Jung’s creative work, but also the remarkable work done by artists, scientists, and spiritual leaders. They introduced a concept called “regression in the service of the ego (RITSE).”

RITSE is a concept engaged by ego psychologists to describe a controlled, temporary, and partial relaxation of the mature ego’s critical and realistic functions. This ego-based process allows for access when we are asleep as well as when we are awake to primitive, unstructured, and often highly symbolic unconscious material, such as created by Carl Jung. RITSE is adaptive, unlike pathological regression, where an individual reverts to immature coping mechanisms under stress. RITSE provides “play space” and sanctuaries. The mature ego deliberately deploys this mechanism to retrieve preconscious or unconscious content, typically for constructive purposes such as problem-solving, insight generation, or creative expression. The “service” aspect means the ego initiates the process not as a defense against anxiety, but as an active strategy to overcome intellectual or emotional impasses.

During the 1940s, Ernst Kris (1953) formalized the concept of RITSE, describing it as the means by which preconscious and unconscious material appears in the creator’s consciousness. Kris’ formulation helped shift ego psychology toward a more positive view of regression, linking it to creativity and innovation. In art and music, RITSE can manifest as a return to a childlike perspective. It is simple, fresh, and unencumbered by adult logic yet skillfully integrated into the final product.

To gain a full appreciation of RITSE’s scope, it is important to note that regression occurs in at least three ways. We regress in time, revisiting our childhood and the collective history of our society and culture, possibly through our social unconscious (Hopper and Weinberg, 2019) or our collective unconscious (Jung, 1978). We also regress in our use of form and structure. This is where Ernst Kris’s perspective on RITSE in art comes into play, and where Jung’s *Red Book* is in full display. Third, there is regression in defensive structure. We deploy increasingly primitive defenses, such as repression and displacement (A. Freud, 2018), once again, not on behalf of coping with stress, but rather on behalf of some adaptive purpose.

In his work with Mitch Lauridsen, Kurt Jung was encouraging all three forms of regression. He encouraged Mitch to look back at his recent and distant past (especially in his interpretation of Mitch’s dreams). He invited Mitch to be creative when envisioning future meetings with Frank and Gwen (and in his encouragement of Mitch to share his dreams). Finally, it was in Kurt Jung’s work with Mitch on the discovery of courage in facing the bear and menacing hoodlums in his dream, that Kurt nurtured Mitch’s regression back to childhood (bears) and early adult (hoodlums). With the constructive return to earlier times and earlier fears, Kurt was able to assist Mitch in facing present-day fears (meeting with Frank).

RITSE is truly an extraordinary capacity of the human psyche. We can move backward in personal and collective history to explore alternative portrayals of reality and to be selective regarding how best to guard against the massive intrusion of anxiety-producing memories, impulses or existential concerns. Someone like Carl Jung could plunge for a short while each day into “madness” as he chisels on granite blocks and as he prepared the visual illustrations and the narrative (written in beautiful old Gothic script) in his *Red Book* (Jung, 2009). An artist such as Edvard Munch, can enter his Oslo Norward studio and create a series of deeply troubling paintings depicting anguish and despair without slipping into deep depression himself. Thomas Wolfe

(2011) retains his sanity while write “madly” on tablets about his troubled childhood in North Carolina and about his inability to ever “go home again.” We protect ourselves and find support inside ourselves for insightful and creative endeavors, while pushing the boundaries of emotional regulation.

The Thin Place

Finally, I wish to comment on the special place where Kurt Jung (and his uncle) does their work. This is also the special place where Carl Jung went “mad” and where Mitch Lauridsen found a bit of “madness” himself. Contemporary psychotherapists would identify the safe setting provided by the Jungs as a “container” for the anxiety that inevitably arise in depth-based psychotherapy and organizational consultation. Matt Miles identifies these as temporary settings where people can explore and play with alternative behaviors. These are also sanctuaries where we can re-habilitate, learn and even transform (Bergquist, Weitz and Pomerantz, 2026).

There is another term that might be applied. This term comes from those who seek to describe the remarkable insights and commitments that arise in especially spiritual locations around the world. These locations were called Thin Places by the Celts. They are called “thin” because only a thin boundary between the grounded reality of our everyday life (the secular) and the ethereal reality of the transcendental and transformative (the sacred). Some thin places have been well-known to spiritual seekers for centuries and have become popular places of pilgrimage, such as the isle of Iona and Findhorn in Scotland, Lourdes in France and Sedona in the Unites States.

Thin places exist not only at physical locations (such as Lourdes, Findhorn, and Sedona) but also as moments or spaces in everyday life where the sacred is felt more intensely. These personal thin places are particular to our own experience of a divine presence. and serve as touchstones as we allow the spiritual to enter our life. They can be the sources of Awe that Dacher Keltner (Keltner, 2023) identifies—such as enthralling landscapes, beautiful or historic architectural sites, or dynamic, changing seashores. The experience of a thin place often brings clarity, spiritual renewal, and a sense of intimacy with the Divine.

For me, a thin place exists in my hearing of a Mahler Symphony. I also find a sense of the divine entering my life when I listen to choral work by the contemporary composer Morton Lauridsen (for whom I named my hypothetical client of Dr. Jung).

I suggest that Mitch Lauridsen found a thin place when traveling to Zurich and meeting for several weeks with Dr. Jung. For Mitch and many other people, a thin place is found (or created) when one is willing to risk gaining self-insight, when one is willing to travel far (physically or psychologically), and when one is willing to be guided by and learn from a person of wisdom, courage and vision, such as Kurt and Carl Jung.

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