



Follow up to *The Final Interlude*

Rob Henderson's Interview

with

Russell Lockhart

Follow up to *The Final Interlude*

RH: A few years ago, you and your friend and fellow analyst, Lee Roloff, wrote a fascinating book entitled, *The Final Interlude: Advancing Age and Life's End*. I would like to ask you some questions as a follow up.

Jung wrote:

It is not that I wish we had a life after death. In fact, I would prefer not to foster such ideas. Still, I must state, to give reality its due, that, without my wishing and without my doing anything about it, thoughts of this nature move about within me. I can't say whether these thoughts are true or false, but I do know they are there, and can be given utterance, if I do not repress them out of some prejudice.¹

Do you have such thoughts spinning in you? What are they like?

RL: Of course. I just turned 82 and can bear witness to an increase in spontaneous and autonomous thoughts, images and feelings all connected in one way or another with the theme of death and *what comes next*. Many such experiences are at variance with what I consider my beliefs to be, at odds with my insights, often clashing with my rational consciousness. Like Jung, I do not ignore or turn away these disparities, but honor them, take them up, and give them their due, all as part of what Jung describes as how a man must do his best to form a conception of death and the life after.

Whatever my conceptions of death and life after have become, the experience that set them in motion occurred when I was eight years old. I was with my Cub Scout pack, hiking in the mountains. We got to rough-housing as kids do and I was tripped up and began to roll off the path and down the mountain. I was getting pretty banged up and was in a panic because I could not stop rolling. At one point, I heard a very loud voice cry out, "Grab hold of the tree." I crashed into a small tree and I grabbed hold of it for dear life. As I was shaking and trembling with fear, I saw in the sky a huge owl—so large it filled half the sky. I knew it was this strange owl that had spoken to me, and I knew it saved my life as I could see that I was close to the edge. It was some time before I was rescued and until I was, I kept thanking the owl over and over and out loud. The owl faded. I did not speak to anyone about this experience for a long time.

What was this? To an 8-year-old kid, it was a total mystery. To an 82-year-old man, it remains a total mystery.

To this day, this experience is the most powerful experience of my life. This memory always is close by. Over the years, I have had numerous dreams of owls. In many of these dreams, the owl speaks, often in the form of instructions and directions. I pay close attention to these experiences and they often inform my actions and creative activities.

This experience with the owl in the sky followed my being expelled from Sunday school. The minister asked my parents to take me home and not to return. I had been harassing him with questions about evolution. By this time, I was a little scientist. I had a large collection of bugs, I was into astronomy (building telescopes), and chemistry (I had had my own lab) and photography (taking photos through the telescopes), and publishing (*The Tech Observer* which I sold to neighbors). I was an avid reader, and I was a little Trotskyite, having a communist neighbor as a mentor. The minister found me impossible and kicked me out. I never went back to his church or to any other. Although I have studied the world's major religions and many minor ones, I do not describe myself as religious in any traditional or doctrinaire sense. I do not like the word spiritual and do not consider myself spiritual in any of the usual senses. I do not subscribe to or believe in any of the usual conceptions of any form of life after death.

I have never had a dream that directly brought up *my* life after I die. As I get closer to that time, my curiosity about any afterlife is active but not enough to bring it to any level of belief. I have experienced many dreams of people who have died, both people distant from me, and those close to me. I have wondered whether the realm of the dead communicates to the living through dreams. I have experienced this *in* dreams. I have experienced *in* dreams people developing and doing and saying things they never had done or said when alive. Such experiences raise questions I wrestle with but do not rise to the level of belief in a personal afterlife. I find myself attracted to statements like that of Thornton Wilder: "There is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge is love, the only survival, the only meaning." To quote Don Williams, the country music singer, "I believe in love." More on this later.

I have had many experiences that pose deeper questions. For example, one day I was speeding on the freeway, and glancing in the rear-view mirror (keeping an eye out for police), I recognized the person from graduate school days, driving fast up behind me and getting awfully close. It was strange because he was in a green Volkswagen and I knew that he drove a Jaguar. I changed lanes, rolled down my window and prepared to wave at him. But no car drove along side and as I scanned the freeway, there was no green Volkswagen. There were no offramps. I started to feel nauseous and started to shake. A couple of weeks later, I was at a convention where graduates from USC traditionally meet and party. Remembering my experience on the freeway, I asked about him. I was told that he had been killed in a traffic accident. I further learned that he had been driving a green Volkswagen (his Jaguar was in the shop) and that he had crashed into the back of a truck at high speed. Further questions pinpointed the date and time to

the same time period as my experience. He had been a fellow graduate student. We were not close. There was no emotional bond.

So, like the owl, an experience is “presented” to me in a way that I cannot account for. The owl was utterly real to me and it saved my life. The freeway experience taught me about the *relativity* of psyche’s space and time and its potential *quantum* nature. I was on the freeway in Los Angeles; but my psyche’s experience was somewhere else at the same time witnessing in some sense something I had no other way of knowing.

I get nowhere thinking of these experiences as projections or hallucinations or any other such ready-made explanations. These and many other experiences I take as simply *real*. They are not something I believe because I know them. Belief is irrelevant. The *fact* of such experiences coupled with my training as an empiricist and scientist, lends credence to the *possibilities* of things I have not directly experienced—but might. So, my saying I don’t believe in this or that is meaningless to me. I do believe in the *potential* of the unknown to inform my direct experience with impossibilities from the perspective of the usual order of things. A little thought along these lines suggests that one can be informed of the past, present and future of things one cannot know otherwise. Still, an air of mystery (which etymologically means “seeing with the eyes closed”) pervades these experiences. I do value such experiences beyond measure.

I did not experience the owl as something personal arising in some way from *my* history. I think of it as having an *independent* existence that I became aware of, an independent existence from a source I did not know then, nor know now the nature of. I do not call it the “unconscious” because that still feels too personal. So, I call it *Other*. I have experienced things presented to my experience in dreams, visions, and synchronicities I do not doubt, but I can confirm nothing beyond the reality of my experience. I do experience these things as objective and separate from my subjectivity.

So, is there life after death? It is possible. But I have not as yet experienced it in any form, and I do not at present believe in it. But I do believe in what I have called the *source* of experiences that present themselves that are not and cannot be products of one’s personal experience. And I feel free to conjecture as to the nature of such realities beyond the ken of what we call ordinary reality. Perhaps we can dig into this as we continue on.

RH: The manner in which that Minister treated young Russ was absolutely terrible. He exemplifies the worst of ministry. As I read your two experiences, I thought of how Jung described God at the end of his long life. I have wondered why this came months before he died:

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

I thought of Jung also when you said: “They are not something I believe because I know them.” Do death and beyond bring up the God question?

RL: Before responding to the God question, I would like to give that minister a long overdue thank you. When I pushed “evolution,” he pushed back with “*Revelation*.” As a little 8-year-old troublemaker, I said, “No!” to *Revelation* in an act of rebellion. And, indeed, it was many years later that I would finally read *Revelation* and fell in love with the apocalyptic imagery. At about 13 years of age, I began a deep study of world religious phenomena and the literature of the world religions. Though I was not religious, then, or now, I was fascinated by the human *phenomenon* of religion, mysticism, and spiritualism in all forms. It is something like my relation to jazz. I do not like jazz, but I love reading the history of jazz. I am no good at chess, but I have mastered chess history. And so it is with many things. In any event, I finally read *Revelation*. It was clear to me that this book was utterly different than any other book in the Hebrew or Christian Bibles. I also was enamored with John the Baptist but had little interest in Jesus. It was in 1975, in my 37th year, that I read J. Massyngberde Ford’s *Revelation: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*.² In this work she provides the evidence necessary for determining that it was John the Baptist and not the Apostle John, or the John of Patmos, or John the Elder who wrote *Revelation*. Since that time, I have studied everything I can find on John the Baptist and have included him as a central figure in a novel I am writing.³ So I consider this a boon and bounty from that early exclusion by the Methodist minister.

I cannot answer your God question in any simple way, so I will respond in layers. I will begin with what I call the *qualities* inherent in the experiences I have described. They are exemplars of many such experiences.

One such quality is *objectivity*. This type of experience has an objective existence beyond my own. The experience itself conveys nothing about the *source* of the experience. I certainly have conjectures about the source, but no direct experience or evidence of a source. Yes, I believe in the independent existence of the source, but I do not know that source—only the experience, only the Owl.

Another quality is *intelligence*. The experience conveyed knowledge I did not know. The Owl knew about the tree. I did not. The experience of my friend on the freeway contained knowledge I had no way of knowing.

Purpose is another quality these experiences have—even if I cannot discern the purpose. The Owl wanted my life saved. Why and for what remain deeply animating questions to me. I have no idea of the purpose of the experience with my friend on the freeway. This quality of purpose indicates the operating of a distinct *intentionality* of a consciousness other than my own.

In addition to these qualities, there seem to be specific results of having had such experiences. The fact of such experiences, for me and others I am aware of, induces a kind of *propensity* for such experiences. They come more often, become more diverse, and facilitate a greater degree of unusual happenings and experiences, especially in relation to synchronicities. What increases as well is access to what might be thought of as autonomous creative *sparks* that have a distinct quality of *otherness*. This is clearly related to what Hilma af Klint (mother of

abstract art) experienced in 1906, when figures she experienced painted “though” her. It is typical of these experiences that they cannot be denied, cannot be forgotten, and their source cannot be known beyond the experiences as such. I experience these things as both *gifts* and *tasks*.

I have been profoundly affected by Henri Corbin’s question: *How do we feed the angel?* And by his answer: “*We feed the angel with our substance.*”⁴ I have no trouble using the term “angel” here because I am using it in its oldest sense, meaning *messenger*. In this sense, I can affirm that the Owl was a messenger, that the experience on the freeway had the quality of a message. What Corbin is highlighting with this query, is that the delivery of the message leaves the angel *hungry*. The angel feeds us its message. The *Eros* feeling of this— and the relational quality of these experiences cannot be denied—implies that we must in turn feed the angel, feed the angel with our *substance*. As crazy as this line of thought may seem to others, I believe it is psychologically correct, because part of the aftermath of these experiences is a feeling of *indebtedness*. I am *in debt* to the Owl for saving my life. So how to “pay back,” how feed the angel with my substance? This is a deep and troublesome question.

In exploring the meanings of “substance,” it becomes clear that Corbin is speaking of substance in its sense of *essence*, one’s essential nature. A little reflection suggests he is not referring to one’s ego, or even to one’s identity. He is referring to something *individual*, and this suggests he is speaking of what results from one’s process of *becoming* individual, that is *individuation*. As individuation proceeds, the *center* of personality shifts from the ego to the Self. Corbin is suggesting that the Self is the resource from which the angel is to be fed.

But how can this be done? The ego cannot direct the Self, so it must be that the Self directs the ego in the ways that this occurs through dreams, visions, synchronicities, but now directed at informing the ego what the ego *can* do that will serve the purpose. I think this was exactly what Jung was referring to when he said:

What is the great Dream? It consists of the many small dreams and the many acts of humility and submission to their hints. It is the future and the picture of the new world, which we do not understand yet. We cannot know better than the unconscious and its intimations. There is a fair chance of finding what we seek in vain in our conscious world. Where else could it be?⁵

You can see here that Jung pictures the ego *submitting* to the intentionality in dreams that is other than ego, that leads to many acts of humility (not inflation or grandiosity) and to the hints contained both in dreams and in one’s actions in relation to the intention of dream. It is in these things that one gathers the sense of substance that Corbin is thinking of as food for the angel. I like Jung’s emphasis here on *acts*. These acts, led by dreams, embody our substance.

I do not have any belief in God as promulgated in any of the world’s religions, nor do I have any direct experience that I can identify as the god of any of the world’s religions, or a

known god of any kind. The owl is so much more real to me than God. If I say that God is the source of the Owl, I experience nothing. If I say that an archetype is the source of the Owl, I experience nothing. Anything I “name” as a source is without substance in my experience. For this reason, I leave the source as a mystery I *do* believe in, but as to its nature, I have no idea.

I imagine this response to the “God question” is unsatisfactory, but it is as accurate as I can make it.

RH: Am I right that you are saying you do not believe in God or “know” God, as Jung said? I wonder if your experience with the owl comes close to Jung’s notion of God.

RL: Your question prompts going deeper into this thicket. Most anyone involved with Jung’s psychology is familiar with Jung’s famous answer to John Freeman’s question in his 1959 BBC interview with Jung, asking Jung if he believed in God *now*? Jung had earlier told Freeman that when he was a child, he believed in God. “Now?” Jung answered and paused for a long time. “Difficult to answer. I *know*. I don’t need to believe. I know.” Jung’s answer sparked controversies far and wide. When asked directly about this, Jung wrote: “Mr. Freeman in his characteristic manner fired the question you allude to at me in a somewhat surprising way, so that I was perplexed and had to say the next thing which came into my mind.”⁶

What is it that perplexed Jung? Four years earlier, he had written:

All that I have learned has led me step by step to an unshakable conviction of the existence of God. I only believe in what I know. And that eliminates believing. Therefore, I do not take his existence on belief—I *know* that he exists.⁷

This statement too was in an interview. What is Jung saying here? “Conviction” is commonly held to mean “belief.” Jung seems to be saying he has an unshakable belief in the existence of God. Then he says he *only* believes in what he knows. This seems to be saying that he has an unshakable belief in what he knows. He then says that this belief in what he knows eliminates believing. But how does belief eliminate believing? Therefore, as his logic implies, God’s existence is not based on believing, but knowing. Simply put, Jung *knows* that God exists.

So, in the 1959 BBC interview, Jung shorthands this 1955 statement in these words: “I know. I don’t need to believe. I know.”

But *what* is it that Jung knows? For some reason, Freeman chose not to press Jung on this point. Knowing Freeman’s “bulldog” nature in “exposing” the private lives of public figures, this failure to pursue what Jung meant on this central issue of knowing that God exists has puzzled me.

In Jung's famous reply, he speaks of not *needing* to believe. He seems to mean that since he *knows*, he does not *need* to believe, as if belief is something that occurs only in place of *not* knowing. Again, the question arises: What is it that Jung *knows*?

Jung made many attempts to clarify what he meant following the storm of controversy. All the clarifications come down to these elements: (1) we can only *know* our experiences; (2) we cannot *know* what lies behind or causes these experiences; (3) each person's experience will be different in various ways; and (4) we cannot escape these limitations of the human psyche.

Trying to clarify further, Jung wrote that "There is no doubt in my mind that there is an original behind our images, but that it is inaccessible." Further, "we cannot prove the physical existence of God." And this: "I am well satisfied with the fact that I know experiences which I cannot avoid calling numinous or divine." And this: "I find that all my thoughts circle around God like planets around the sun and are as irresistibly attracted by him." And this: "If one experiences himself and comes in the end to know more or less clearly who he is, then he has also experienced something of God and who he is."

In many places, Jung maintains he is speaking only of the *Imago Dei*, the God-Image. And clearly Jung had innumerable direct experiences of the *Imago Dei* and which he unhesitatingly *names* God. Jung expands what this *name* covers in what you quoted earlier, Rob:

This is the name by which I designate all things which cross my willful path violently and recklessly, all things which upset my subjective views, plans and intentions and change the course of my life for better or worse.⁸

What is so often confusing, is that Jung writes knowingly of God's characteristics (e.g., God's unconsciousness in his *Answer to Job*) where it is not clear that he is speaking only of the *Imago Dei*. This is why I use the word *thicket*. There is no clear ground in a thicket. I hope this excursus into Jung's comments on the "belief-know" issue is responsive to the first part of your question.

So, what is *my* position on this question?

In contrast to Jung, I did not believe in God as a child. I do not believe in God now. I do *know* that I have experiences that have their origin beyond me, beyond my personal being, beyond my personal psyche. I do *believe* in the existence and the reality of whatever it is that gives rise to these experiences. My name for this is *Other*. Jung was comfortable naming this mystery God. I am not.

I respect the world's religions and the religious in all such traditions as well as the literature and the cultural contributions of these expressions of the long-standing human struggle with what you call the "God question." I am content to know the Owl and all other experiences I have had of the *Other*. I am content to dwell in the experiences, to imagine on them, to see what comes, ever aware that I am dealing with unfathomable mysteries.

I like what Albert Einstein is reputed to have said in his final days: “I have been thinking the whole of my life that I would demystify the universe. But what has happened is just the contrary. The deeper I went into existence, the more the mystery deepened. I am dying full of wonder. I am dying in wonder.”⁹

RH: I really appreciate your response, Russ. Thanks. I have a practical question as we consider death. You are probably like me and many Jungians as we deal with the pending end of our lives. For over 50 years I have collected a whole library of Jungian books and writings: including ones that are rare and costly. I have many volumes of dream journals filled with my work on the dreams and many pages of active imagination. I wonder now what do I do with all of these precious friends. What have you decided?

RL: I have thousands of books, cabinets full of papers, shelves full of notebooks and journals, art everywhere, endless stuff. Decided? Rob, to deal with the *thingness of things*, one needs a sensation function. What to do with the ineluctable material reality of what you are calling “precious friends,” is my worst nightmare. I know how to *acquire*; I do not know how to let go. I’ve no dreams about this issue that might guide me. Intuitions focus on what Jung said about how to live in these days when the future is running out, that is, to live as if one will live forever. So, more stuff gathers as if some strange attractor were at work. It is all quite beyond me. But I do realize that this is not an acceptable position. I must buck up to the task and I am doing it.

I think the nominal term for what we are talking about is *memorabilia*, all those objects we keep for untold reasons. The word itself contains the key to what this is about: *memory*. Why are we not satisfied with memory itself and insist on the *materialization* of all that we keep and collect? I, like many others I presume, if asked, will have all sorts of good reasons for these accumulations. But as I think psychologically about this, I think the materialization of memory is rooted in *fear*, that is the *loss* of memory itself. This becomes ever more acute as one ages and the likelihood of the organic loss of memory threatens. As I reflect on this, I can’t help but feel that much of this is *apotropaic* in nature, that is, gestures that ward off evil. We keep things so that we will *not* forget but forget we will. The *death* of memory.

I am surrounded by these materializations of memory. In many ways, whether they are my creations or those of others, they feel like bits and pieces of my identity. They are part of me. They are part of who I am. How can I part with them? No one else will have this same relation to these things. When I am gone, my invisible tendrillic connection to these things will be gone as well.

At present, my memory is intact. What I have decided, to answer your question directly, is to bring all these objects, all these “precious friends” as you call them, bring them back as fully as possible into my memory and then to let them go, to dematerialize then in one way or another. This dematerializing can take many forms. I consider all such effort needs to be of a ritual nature.

As an example, since I was a kid, I loved bookstores and always wanted to own a bookstore. This was a desire never actualized, never materialized. But with the advent of the internet, it has become possible to have a *virtual* bookstore. And this I have materialized as *The Owl Bookshop* online at Abeooks.com. So, I take a book off the shelf and decide whether to put it for sale in my bookshop, or to find a suitable place to donate it, for example by donating to prisons, libraries, or others. With each book, I recall when I bought it and why and what I got from it. I begin a deep memory ritual with it. This is satisfying and I can begin to say goodbye to these precious friends. I like the feeling of my books circulating in other people's lives where their value can live on.

My dreams, active imaginations, and psychological work? Again, I am taking these things in to my memory anew. Then I will destroy them in a ritual manner. Ever since I began to publish articles and books, I have included dreams, imaginations, synchronicities, etc. I am currently working on a book entitled, *Gleanings from the Dreamfield*. I think it will be my most important work. It focuses on thirteen of my most important dreams and through them, I tell the story of what I have learned about living a life of the psyche. My writings become an afterlife of sorts, and I value that.

For the rest? Again, I will follow the ritual of taking them into my memory and then finding a way to let them go. I will not let my wife or children be burdened by these things. Hopefully, I will have enough time remaining before I die or before my memory begins to slip away to actualize this resolve.

RH: My father died before our kids were born and I had always wished he could have met both our sons. One night I had a dream in which my father was walking up our driveway to visit and to see our kids. It was a wonderful feeling as the dream ended, and now they have all met each other. What are some of your notions when we dream of a person like I did of my Dad?

RL: In the early 70's, during my analysis with James Kirsch, I had three dreams over a period of weeks. The dream was the same each time. It was a figure telling me he was my grandfather. The figure was 50-60 years old, wearing an old knitted sweater and sporting an unusual cap. He was very close to me in the dream and was looking intensely into my eyes. I had known my grandfathers, so I knew this was an "inner" grandfather, a prospect I found pleasing. I did all the usual things: active imagination, drawing, sculpting, brooding, etc. No matter what I did, the figure did not respond. I had never experienced this before. The lack of response from the figure troubled James and me as well. Finally, after the third dream, James told me to tell this dream to my mother. James was at a loss as to where this idea came from, but it came to him as a flash and he could not ignore it.

When I told my mother of the three dreams and what the figure said, she became hysterical, unlike anything I had ever experienced with her. After a long time, I was able to calm

her down, and I asked her what was going on. She told me that my real grandfather was a man named John Davis. He and her mother had had an affair and my mother was the product of this union. My mother learned of this only when her mother was dying. She felt my mother should know. My mother was a proud woman and the fact that she was “illegitimate” deeply troubled her. She vowed never to tell anyone this truth, including my father. And she kept this secret until I told her my dreams. She gave me a picture of him as a young man in a sailor’s uniform and gave me his Navy dog-tags.

It took awhile, but I finally was able to set out to find my grandfather’s grave. I won’t go into the details of this journey here which was marked by numerous and profound synchronicities. My dreams of my grandfather and my journey to find him were included as part of a NBC documentary (“The Secret World of Dreams”). I have also written up the details in an essay entitled, “Finding Grandfather: Dreams, Synchronicities and the Future.”¹⁰

I did find his grave and I sat there with him. And though I could conjure his image again in greater detail having by then seen pictures of him as an older man, there was only silence. I finally accepted silence as the proper response to the enormity of what I had dreamed and experienced.

The dreams and the consequences radically expanded my sense of the possibilities dreams may reveal. In my dream, my grandfather was alive. I finally took this to mean that indeed there is a reality where that is so. Moreover, I began to see that dreams may convey many different realities. Note the plural in contrast to the singular reality, which is the typical object of our conscious attention.

In my dream series, my grandfather reveals a reality about what we usually call reality (the fact of his being my grandfather, the fact of revealing a secret unknown to me). Dreams can do that. Notice that if I had not told my mother, as prompted by James, the figure would have remained an “inner” grandfather and not my actual grandfather. Does this then constitute a belief in an afterlife? For me it does not. What it does constitute is evidence of multiple realities, in contrast to the singular reality of our consciousness.

Over the years since this experience I have seen how “the dead” in dreams are less usefully seen as projections, as wish fulfillments, and other such psychological explanations. To me, it is simpler to speak of the realities beyond our usual consciousness and that knowledge of these realities may come to us in dreams.

Moreover, the deeper dreams go, the more they converge on quantum realities. Again note the plural. When we dream of people who are dead, they almost always appear in living form. Moreover, they change and transform in ways that are not predictable from their known

characteristics while living in what we take as singular reality.

So, to respond to your dream directly, Rob, my sense is that there is a reality where your dad met your children. And the dream brings knowledge of this to you.

Now, then, this is where imagination can become a form of engagement with the dead. This is akin to what Jung experienced when his house became filled with “presences,” and the psychic atmosphere became dense. In exasperation, Jung cried out, “What in the world is this?” In response, there was a chorus of voices that announced: “We have come back from Jerusalem where we found not what we sought.” This was the beginning of *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos*. Yes, one can speak of projections and such. But, I think it is more accurate to say that a reality of a different sort manifested in the usual notion of reality. Such things can happen in dreams, visions, synchronicities and other forms of experiencing the Other. These and many other strange and weird experiences have led me to conclude that we have a great deal to learn from the dead.

RH: I really appreciate your deep reflection and sharing, Russ. It is obvious you have done much important work on yourself. I remember when you shared with me your daughter’s death and how sad it was and is. It is hard to even imagine. In your grief work over the years following her death, where have you imagined she is? What has it been like to live with her after her death?

RL: The night Sharon died I had a remarkable dream. In the dream, I see an extraordinary building. This is where Sharon is. The outside of the building is a flux of colors and flowers of all kinds, swirling. There is no way into or out of this building. Watching the flow of colors and flowers generates a deep and profound peace. It is as if the building itself is alive—but not even as if; it *is* alive.

In the morning, I wrote the dream out and was prompted as well to write a poem.

*How excellent the dying
When arrival’s come to this:
A building of flowers alive
Happy, she’s with the swirling.*

The dream felt like a blessing. And still Dickenson’s image of the soul alone felt deepened. In the years since then, I have dreamed of Sharon only a few times, but each dream was connected with this strange but beautiful “building.” When I think of Sharon, the image comes immediately and washes over me, and I am renewed in my appreciation and love of her. So, this is where I imagine she is. I can imagine nothing else.

One thing I have not been able to do. Shortly after her death, I was seized with the impulse to write a poem “for her.” I knew it was to be called, *A Father’s Elegy*. It is easy for me

to write in poetic forms and I knew the general requirements of the elegiac form. But try as I may, now over many years, I cannot get far with this. I get stopped as if something simply will not write a “lament for the dead.” As I have wrestled with this over these years, I am coming to the realization that a lament is not the correct form for my daughter. It is to be something else and I am eager to see what it is. It has not revealed itself yet, but I am convinced that it will come, and I will do it, before I die.

RH: Some look at life having a first and second half—each half with its own dynamics and tasks. I interviewed Joe Henderson when he was in his 90s and he said he was in the fourth half of his life. We both laughed when he said that, but I think he was also serious as he looked back upon his years. Have you thought of your life in that way?

R.L.: Joe was always ready with a double-edged quip; funny, yes, but always teaching something of value. He was saying, I think, that the two-halves-of-life idea was too limited, so he was humorously saying there were at least four halves. There is the old idea of Saturnian stages of man, each transit of Saturn being approximately twenty-eight years. Most people die sometime in the third transit of Saturn (57-85), but Joe lived well into his fourth Saturn, dying at 104 years of age. My co-author, Lee Roloff, was partial to Erikson’s eight stages of psychosocial development and was particularly interested in the last stage (65-death), which his dream called, “the final interlude.” Lee was 88 when he died, so he was in his fourth Saturn, just after we finished the book.

I’ve been partial to the Saturn cycles relating to stages of life. Each cycle is further divided into quarters of seven years and these quarter periods have distinct life demarcations in terms of chronological years, but also in terms of the *duration* of important life periods. Jung talked about it taking seven years to become free of traumatic events such as divorce, major illness or death of a loved one. Saturn’s Greek name is Chronos, and here we see the more direct link to the “chronology” of time. I use the transits of Saturn in my analytic work a great deal and find it useful in reflecting on the time of important events (including dreams and other psychic events).

All these chronologies are linear. A neglected aspect of “age” relates to the age of psychological development, which is not linear, but very complex. For example, a man may be in mid-life, but his maturity is still at an adolescent level. Most people do not develop much maturity in terms of the age or degree of consciousness. Most people develop very little in relation to the integration of shadow, and therefore remain at an immature degree. Most people do not develop very far in terms of resolution of complexes. If we think of individuation, it is clear that most people achieve only minor degrees of individuation. We do not have good ways of assessing any of these degrees of development, but they are consequential in all areas of life.

Going back to the first-half/second-half-of-life issue, in general there are, as you note, particular tasks and dynamics that we think of as belonging to these halves. But in practice, each person is a complex mixture of different tasks and dynamics, different ages and levels of development. One might argue that experiences of the collective psyche should wait for the second half of life, or until one has made progress on shadow-integration and resolution of complexes. This is an idea or perhaps an ideal; but when face-to-face with a person in analysis, things are rarely this simple.

A final thought on your question. It is common in middle age to dream of one's childhood or adolescence. This often is treated as a kind of judgment of one's maturity (childish, like a puer, etc.). But I find such dreams bringing forth aspects of one's potential that have lain fallow and unattended and unknown, that are now *necessary* to take up as one approaches the third Saturn. Such things are "missing pieces" of one's wholeness. These become a useful animating aspect, particularly of the final interlude.

RH: Will you share some of the ways you are preparing for the end of your life?

RL: Well, there are the usual things. Physician's directives, a will, final instructions, other legal documents and such. These things are mundane even if all "about" death. Your question points to deeper things. I'll respond by trying to say what is *crucial* in the approach to my end. What is crucial revolves around the question of what is necessary to *complete* before I die. I do not find myself fearing death, nor feeling like there are major wrongs I need to right with anyone. I have said what I need to say, or do not feel any need to say anything further to anyone. I do enjoy deeply my present relationships with family and friends, though they have dwindled a lot as people I am close to die. I am in awe of the abundance of life I experience in my new granddaughter, now 18 months old.

But as I approach my end, what I find most intriguing is that there are so many creative sparks active in my experience and in my dreams. So many, I cannot possibly respond to all of them. The engine of this is at full throttle and I am amazed by it. In a way it is burdensome because giving these things their due is quite beyond me. But I do *like* the feeling of *life* they bring me. I do try to give voice to some of these sparks visiting me by posting on my blog or on social media.

There are several things I do want to complete for sure. One is my novel, *Dreams: The Final Heresy*. This novel focuses on a fictional lost manuscript of John the Baptist about dreams being the only true church. The crisis peaks at the election of a new pope—a woman! Another is a book I have titled, *Gleanings from the Dreamfield*. In this book, I am focusing on thirteen of my dreams which I consider life-changing in various ways. I tell the story of these dreams as a way to convey what I have learned about dreams in my nearly half-century as an analyst. Another book is *Commodification of Desire*, where I try to describe my sense of the dangers of

the *anti-psyche* dimensions of capitalism and its current rapacious control over life and its inability to deal with the catastrophes that are coming. There is much more in this list.

In short, there are many desires brewing in me. I will bring as many of these things to light as I can. It is this bubbling sense of life, not manufactured by me, but fed from some deep spring of the psyche, that I feel is a good way to enter into the final interlude and my death.

RH: Do you have any final thoughts?

RL: Well, any “final” thoughts I have *now* won’t be final thoughts very long. But several things pop into my mind as you ask me this question.

When I was in high school, playing tennis, winning tournaments, another thing I won was a series of coaching sessions with Pancho Gonzales, one of the great tennis players at that time. He taught me to serve in the way he served, and his serve was the most powerful serve in tennis. But he taught me something more valuable. In my first lesson, he called me to the net, and proceeded to serve at my head. I ducked. I backed up. I fell. After these humiliations, he came to the net, leaned toward me, waved me close. “Russ,” he said, “you can’t back up, you can’t fall down, you can’t duck. You must *step into the serve*. There is no other way to play.” After a few more humiliations, I got it. I got it. It became for me a *life* lesson and one that animates me to this day.

My mom died in her sleep. So did my dad. My daughter died as she was unconscious. In reaction to these and other deaths over the years, my response has always been. “No way. I want to be awake. I want to be conscious. I want to be present as fully as possible when death comes. I want to step into it, step into death, as Pancho taught me to step into the serve. To meet head on, face to face with what that moment brings. I do not agree with Dylan Thomas. I will not rage against the dying of the light, or rave in my final night. I hope to be filled with curiosity as I take my last breath.

Thank you, Rob, for your most stimulating questions.

¹ Jung, C. G. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. (Translated and Edited by Aniela Jaffé) New York: Vintage Books (Random House), 1963.

² Ford, J. Massyngberde. *Revelation: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1975. (Volume 38 of *The Anchor Bible*)

³ Lockhart, Russell A. *Dreams: The Final Heresy*. [In progress.]

⁴ Quoted in Paco Mitchell’s “The Heron’s Demand.” *Dream Network Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 2, 2012. See also, Russell Arthur Lockhart, *Dreams As Angels: Feeding the Dream with Our Substance*. [ralockhart.com/WP/dreamsasangels.pdf]

⁵ Jung, C. G. *Letters*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975. Vol 2: Letter to Sir Herbert Read, September 2, 1960, p. 591-592.

⁶ Jung, C. G. *Letters*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975. Vol 2: Letter to M. Leonard, December 5, 1959, p. 525.

⁷ Jung, C. G. "Men, Women, and God." In *C. G. Jung Speaking: Interviews and Encounters*. Ed. By William McGuire and R. F. C. Hull. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977, p. 251.

⁸ Jung, C. G. *Letters*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975. Vol 2: Letter to M. Leonard, December 5, 1959, p. 525.

⁹ <https://medium.com/illumination/wonderment-is-for-all-ages-1999d64767>

¹⁰ ralockhart.com/WP/FindingGrandfather.pdf

Comments welcome: ral@ralockhart.com

The Final Interlude may be purchased at Amazon:

<https://tinyurl.com/49nbe832>