

Jung in China

RH: Russell Lockhart is a Jungian analyst living in the northwest corner of the United States, in Everett, Washington. He has been immersed in Jungian psychology for more than 50 years, coming to his own understanding of what Jung was about and what he tried to contribute to the world and to life. People in China, who have never heard of Jung, will be reading this journal. Russell, in your own words, distilled from your years of experience, I would like to invite you to share what you know of Jung that would be essential for people in a far different culture interested in learning about Jung's work.

RL. Thank you, Rob, for inviting me to address a most daunting question. Strangely enough, your question might also be how to introduce Jung's work to the Western world, for in spite of more than a hundred years of historical development, Jung and his contribution remains known only to a minuscule number in the West. With psychology being overtaken by neuroscience, therapy and analysis being overwhelmed by cognitive-behavioral methods, and by the ubiquity of pharmaceutical prescription for an ever-increasing panoply of conditions, the long, deep, arduous work of "know thyself" that characterizes Jungian *work*, is ever more off-limits to insurance, ethical, and legal mandates. It is against this glum background, that I find interest in Jung in "foreign" cultures to be of great interest. Yet with the increasing inter-connectedness of world cultures, the very idea of "foreign" is becoming obsolete. Designations like "East" and "West" will eventually fall away. But for now, these concepts are still meaningful currency. For China, the best possible introduction to Jung is already a part of the long history of Chinese culture. I am referring to Yin-Yang, the ancient concept of the complementarity of opposites; to the *I Ching* (Book of Changes), embodying the autonomy of the intention of the "other" as a source of wisdom, and *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, portraying and personifying a yoga of meditation, breathing, and imagination. In the West, these concepts and texts are generally taken up only after considerable immersion in Jung's psychology. I feel that immersion in these texts prior to immersion in Jung is a more generative foundation for the study of Jung if for no other reason than these sources emphasize the *imperative of experience*. Trying to understand Jung only conceptually without grounding in personal experience will prove of little benefit and value. Each of these sources

from the East, from China, were crucially important to Jung, primarily because of their grounding in experience.

RH. What does it mean to *experience* Jungian psychology?

RL. Your question covers a lot of ground so I'll make some differentiations, sign posts, as it were, in the geography of your question. The *secondary* literature of Jungian psychology consists of hundreds of books and thousands of journal articles. This includes biographies of Jung, textbooks and surveys of Jung's work, applications of Jung's work in many areas, and a prolific quantity of ancillary studies ranging from clinical applications to the explication of Jung's ideas on a great range of topics. I mention this way of experiencing Jung's psychology first, because it is generally in the secondary literature where one first encounters Jungian thought. The *primary* literature of Jung's psychology consists of Jung's work itself, which is published in the *Collected Works*, the seminars and miscellaneous writings as well as several volumes of Jung's correspondence, and Jung's *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. The *experience* of Jung's psychology is quite different in the primary and secondary sources. Many will find reading Jung too difficult and will take up the secondary sources with a certain relief. In general, I believe this is a mistake. What I have always recommended to serious students is to begin with *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* and then to take up Jung's direct work in *chronological* order while following along synchronously with the correspondence. This is a long and arduous journey and not to be taken lightly if for no other reason than that Jung's work is often *psychoactive*. This means that one's own psyche will begin to stir in ways that are unexpected and startling. Jung's work itself stirs not only the intellect, but resounds throughout the body and the depths of one's experience. This is often something that goes *missing*, when Jung's work is being "translated" into the "about" mode. With the publication of Jung's *Red Book* and the coming publication of his "Black Books," we enter a *third* mode of experiencing Jungian psychology. This mode is something I call the *rhizome level of direct experience*. This is the mode where Jung encountered the deeper regions of his psyche, the depth below the personal, the depths that he came later to call the "collective unconscious." Jung's experiences in these unfathomable depths were recorded in conversations and images that constitute the material of the *Black Books* and *The Red Book*. Jung's work here is not "about," but reveals

his direct expression of his embroilment with the living psyche. This is crucial to realize because, as Jung said, *all* his later work came from these experiences. It has been my experience in spending time with *The Red Book* that this is the closest one can get to experiencing the essence of Jungian psychology. It must be said, however, that what one encounters in this material is not for mimetic purposes. Each one of us has a rhizomic layer, each one has their own ways of access, and what one experiences there is not to “reproduce” *The Red Book*, but indeed to engage in those depths and to bring to fruition *what wants to spring from there* for each individual. *That* is the deep secret of what Jung’s psychology points to. It is in that place where one can most deeply experience Jungian psychology and is the most important part of the answer to your question.

RH: What would be one way that you feel Jungian psychology would help a person with their life?

RL. Jung’s psychology is often pictured as so esoteric that it has no practical implications at all. Yet, there are many aspects of Jung’s psychology that have profound implications for human development, social interaction, and the meaning and purpose of one’s life. Becoming aware of one’s shadow, and integrating it in a genuine way, leads to a more complete ego development. The ego’s awareness of its typology and where it needs development of its inferior function, will pay off handsomely in one’s awareness of oneself, and better social relations when one knows how to navigate typological differences, as well as better intimate relationships when one knows how typology impacts eros, empathy and compassion. But these practical implications pale in relation to the ultimate “meaning” of one’s life. Here, Jungian psychology makes a profound contribution because the meaning of life is not found in the ego’s aspirations and collective achievements, but in the degree to which the ego serves the realization of the Self. This cannot be done in ways that are quick, surfacy, or faddish. This is unique to each person. So much of our development in the family and then in school and then as we take up our place in the culture is so over-determined by collective values, the power of others’ images of what we are to become, that it is a wonder at all that one can achieve any connection with the Self, let alone serve its uniqueness. That uniqueness is what underlies the value and importance of dreams

and visions, that is, as providing the portal and the hints necessary for ego to finally take up its task of individuality.

RH: Do you feel it is important for people to try to remember their dreams?

RL: Not just "try" Rob, but to make every effort. Think about how people are so much in thrall to celebrity, fame, fortune, and all manner of collectivity. I think this is true for the East as much as the West, as true for China as for the US. The dream is a primary source of the "subversive" in the service of the individual against the power of the collective.

The dream is the surest ground that forces us to look at who we truly are. Yes, we experience how much more desirable it is to be "like" someone we see in films, or on TV, or on the Internet, or in the news. But for the most part, this is the effluence of the "malignant narcissism" about which Walter Wink writes so persuasively.

Much of psychoanalytic psychology and therapy is in the service of adapting to the collective demands of the day. Jung's psychology works differently by seeking "something else." That something else is the individuality I spoke of above. Paying attention to dreams—which begins in remembering them—is a major way to develop this individuality. Scanning the behemoth of collectivity, you will scarcely find dreaming on the radar. This is true the world over. To me, it is terribly sad.

RH: When we visited China a few years ago, I heard some of the elders who were critical of the younger generations and their efforts to dress in individual ways instead of wearing the Mao coat which they felt contained the important cultural symbols that would help carry on the Chinese culture. A battle between the individual and the collective. Why is individuality important?

RL: The typical bias is that the East is highly regimented by authority and tradition (as personified by the Mao coat), while the West is free and creatively chaotic. I call this a *bias* because deeper analysis reveals the west to be as regimented as the East—only in different ways and by different institutions of power. One need only look at the degree to which advertisement leads to mimetic and cloning “self-regimentation” under the influence and control of corporate powers in the West to

see this in plain view. To the degree that the young in the East begin to follow the West's lead in this regard, they would simply be substituting one form of regimentation for another, with the *illusion* of freedom. This brings us to *why* individuality is important. It is only via a *true individual spirit* that one can escape the regimentation of the state, military, industrial, corporate, educational, political or any other forms of powers that control. Walt Disney, that Western icon of "healthy" entertainment, argued that it was through entertainment that the masses could be controlled more effectively than through any other means—a distinctly unhealthy idea. Yet it is precisely this idea that has overwhelmed current culture with ever increasing depth and breadth, that is, the *Internet*. Everyone is becoming *tethered* to it. The dark side of this is the high degree of regimentation embodied in this no matter the degree of good or value that it enables on a large scale. Over time, this fact alone will work against genuine individuality whether in the East or the West. As I have made clear above, I think that it is the dream that is most subversive to this leviathan of collectivity. It is the dream that carries the seeds of true individuality.