

The Emergence of a Human Being
Disrupting the Boundary Between Consciousness and the Unconscious

by


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B.Sc., University of Victoria, 1999


A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of


MASTER OF ARTS


in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction


We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard


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Abstract

This thesis posits unconscious patterns as the source of feelings of unhappiness and then presents a process for disrupting those patterns. However, neither the propositions about the unconscious nor about the process of disruption are presented explicitly except briefly in an appendix. Instead, the thesis is a narrative unraveling of a fictionalized psychotherapeutic intervention, where the interaction between unconscious elements and consciousness is explicated and disrupted resulting in a shift in the conscious experience of the participants. The process presented goes beyond accounts of consciousness change found in the annals of therapeutic practice. The aim in employing narrative form was to be able to portray subtleties and nuances of this elusive process as it is experienced.

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Table of Contents

1)	Table of Contents	iii
2)	To Know or Not to Know?	v
3)	Road Map or Seat of Your Pants	vi
4)	The Practice	1
5)	The Backhand	3
6)	Arthur Gets Squashed	8
7)	Not Good Enough	13
8)	The Past	14
9)	Permission	15
10)	The Call of the Herd	16
11)	The Little Boy	18
12)	The Waking Dream	20
13)	The Test	21
14)	The Source	27
15)	Turbulence	31
16)	The Dream of the Angry Red Haired Child	33
17)	Reaching for the Quest	35
18)	The Emergence of a Human Being	37
19)	After Words	40
20)	Overview	46
21)	Introduction to Conscious-Unconscious Interactions	47
22)	Conscious-Unconscious Interactions	48

23)	References	51
24)	Bibliography	52

To Know or Not to Know

I am a psychotherapist and in my psychotherapeutic practice most clients come for therapy with an embedded understanding of the world exemplified by the following statement. *If others could only see the facts exactly as they are they would have to admit that I am right and I get frustrated when they think they are right when I know they are wrong.* After a number of sessions a shift in perspective is afforded. The following statement represents this new perspective. *I think I know the facts and I do not and that is why I am frustrated.* In the first statement the client is *in a state of knowing* he is right and the world is wrong. In the second statement the client is *in a state of knowing* he is wrong. In both statements the client is *in a state of knowing*. He has shifted his belief but his state is unchanged. The shift from thinking he is right to thinking he is wrong is beneficial. This shift affords the opportunity to entertain alternative views. This is a positive psychotherapeutic outcome. This outcome could be seen as the carrier of my topic. It is not my topic.

My topic is disruption of the *state of knowing*. My topic has to do with the emergence of a dynamic alternative to the static *state of knowing*. This dynamic alternative is not the goal of psychotherapeutic intervention; it emerges as an effect of the disruption of the *state of knowing*. To shift out of this *state of knowing* the client must pass through a crucible in which his *state of knowing* is annihilated. To do this he must get a glimpse of himself that he is not willing to tolerate. He does this by disrupting his *state of knowing* and opening to the void that is created regardless of any discomfort.

My thesis is a narrative account of a fictionalized psychotherapeutic intervention where the therapist and client navigate this challenging psychic terrain. The client's name is Arthur. Arthur's stories are presented in a different font from the narratives told by the psychotherapist.

The focus of this writing is the trial of Arthur's journey of self-discovery. All characters are compilations of many, both imagined and real, and are not meant to implicate others in any way.

Road Map or Seat of Your Pants?

After producing the narrative I was faced with presenting my work to others. While most readers understood what I was trying to say, there were different responses to the structure of the document. Some were content to be carried along by the story while others requested a map with which to navigate. Some wanted to see more theory while others enjoyed the lack of theory. At first I tried to interweave these suggestions, but after multiple attempts to incorporate different approaches I was unsatisfied with the results. It was suggested that I allow for personal preferences by retaining the stand-alone narrative, but also insert a theoretical overview in the appendix. This would allow for those who wish to be carried along by the story to plunge right in and also accommodate readers that might prefer a theoretical road map before engaging with the text. I have structured the document to allow for this choice. Readers wishing to plunge in are reminded that this is primarily a performance piece; the theory and method emerge as the narrative unfolds. The narrative begins on page one with 'The Practice.' Those wishing to get a gist of the theory before reading the narrative should take a look at the overview on page 46 and the diagrams beginning on page 47.

The Practice

In my practice as a psychotherapist, I understand the term psychotherapy to mean “healing of the mind” and by mind I mean the psychic structure where consciousness and the unconscious interplay, what Jung (1991) called the psyche. These psychic constituents are intertwined and they are best defined in relation to the world and each other. “When one reflects upon what consciousness really is, one is profoundly impressed by the extreme wonder of the fact that an event which takes place outside in the cosmos simultaneously produces an image, that it takes place, so to speak, inside as well, which is to say, becomes conscious.... Theoretically, no limits can be set to the field of consciousness, since it is capable of indefinite extension. Empirically, however, it always finds its limits when it comes up against the *unknown*. This consists of everything we do not know, which, therefore, is not related to the ego as the centre of the field of consciousness. The unknown falls into two groups of objectsThe first group comprises the unknown in the outer world; the second the unknown in the inner world. We call this latter territory the *unconscious*” (p. 3).

Before proceeding further I must say a few things about dichotomies. I choose to use this term dichotomy as an expression of two connected, but often opposing elements. I find this strategy of identifying dichotomous pairs useful. A stand-alone concept becomes much more vivid when set in contrast with its apparent opposite, as just illustrated with the pair unconscious/consciousness. Also the inherent tension that these pairs generate is common in the clients I see. The Buddhist scholar D.T. Suzuki (1963) refers to this dichotomous tension in the following: “The intellect is critical, objective, and always tries to stand apart from the things that are taken up for examination. This alienation or keeping itself aloof from concrete facts on the part of the intellect constantly tends to disregard the real significance of life, of which it is also a manifestation. Therefore, the conflict between feeling and reasoning, religion and science, instinct and knowledge, has been going on since the awakening of consciousness” (p. 79). Even consciousness suffers from the tension of dichotomous pairs.

I am enthusiastic, yet cautious prior to entering into a psychotherapeutic relationship. In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1995) Jung reflected on the difficulty of this endeavor, “For psychotherapy to be effective a close rapport is needed, so close that the doctor cannot shut his eyes to the heights and depths of human suffering. The rapport consists, after all, in a constant comparison and mutual comprehension, in the dialectical confrontation of two opposing psychic realities. If for some reason these mutual impressions do not impinge on each other, the psychotherapeutic process remains ineffective, and no change is produced. Unless both doctor and patient become a problem to each other, no solution is found” (p. 166).

In the world of psychotherapy the conscious mind is the site from which feeling and thought intermingle to create an interpretation of the world. When emotion (the effect of feeling) and reason (the product of thought) open to each other, joining the unconscious and conscious world, the psyche is healthy. On the other hand if the mind depends solely on reason to interpret experience then a battle ensues. Any unconscious elements are dismissed by the reasoning mind. The unconscious pushes these ignored elements back into consciousness. Consciousness experiences these returning unconscious elements emotionally or as a felt-bodily-sense of tension. Reason and emotion are now autonomous agencies working against each other. The clients I see generate this tension by attributing any internal conflict to an external source (projection). They tend to blame the “other.” They come for counseling to get relief from their tension, but they are reluctant to attribute the tension to an internal source, especially not a battle between the conscious mind and the unconscious.

When consciousness and the unconscious become two opposing psychic structures I become a mirror that illuminates the move the client makes that keeps hidden the source of their internal conflict. Both doctor and patient become a problem to each other as the dialectical confrontation of two opposing psychic realities work to find a reasonable solution to the internal tension. There has been however, one client that was different. He too felt the tension, but he suspected

that there was more going on than could be solved by reason alone. His name was Arthur P. and he walked into my office five years ago.

Art was caught in the belief that he was trying to protect others when he was really trying to protect himself and although he was initially not conscious of how he created this dichotomy Art's body was playing out what his mind was denying. This much was obvious from the first story Art told me after his therapy began.

The Backhand

I started playing the game of squash fifteen years ago. I played for ten years becoming a competent, mid-level player. I then stopped for five years. I picked my racket back up a year ago. Since I have been back playing I have been slowly moving up through the levels and have become a strong player. I would like to move to the top ranks of the game but I need to do some technical work. I began training with some of the better players and started taking private lessons from a coach. My coach and I began working on my technical skills. We both soon realized I had a severe lack of power in my backhand. We tried a number of technical changes and this helped, but when put under pressure (and squash is a game of pressure) I would revert to my old familiar habits. We worked extensively on restructuring my stroke. It got better but it was not consistent, especially when it came to cross-court backhand drives. After a particularly grueling session, when I was both exhausted and

frustrated, my coach made a few simple comments. He said, "You don't follow through with any authority, you seem to be holding back. You move well, but you then stop and wait. There is no release. You're not using your power." My initial response was "I do not want to wildly follow through. I do not want to hit my opponent." My coach said, "Art, the follow through is forward into the huge open space in front of you, that space is yours." I not only heard this, I felt it. This resonated true in a part of me that I had not thought used for squash. I believed I did not want to hurt anybody. I began to see the way I held myself on court. I close my body around my chest, trying to make myself smaller than I am, keeping out of the way, withdrawing my power. I then realized that I was not only concerned about the other. I was concerned about myself. I did not want to get hurt. I was diminishing my power as a result. I now knew that the movement of my body on court had been shaped as much by my unconscious beliefs as by my conscious beliefs. On the conscious level, I believed I was protecting the other, but unconsciously I was really trying to protect myself.

Arthur was this big, seemingly powerful man who worked hard to increase his power, while at the same time he worked just as hard to diminish this very same power. By repressing discrepancies about himself he was exerting energy to

diminish his energy. From his backhand story it was possible to see he had been trapped in a dichotomy of his own creation.

This ability to conceal from oneself, often with dire consequences, was fascinating and I wondered if it had been addressed in the literature. I recalled from my training the stories of conflict between the two most influential practitioners of psychotherapy, Freud and Jung, and I wondered if this ability to conceal from oneself had been in play and if it had, whether they had addressed it. What I found was surprising. Freud was incapable of seeing what Jung saw in Freud. Freud, the creator of both the theory and the therapeutic tools to flush out neurosis, appeared incapable of seeing his own neurosis. From Jung's *Memoir's* (1995) I came upon this.

“There was something else that seemed to me significant at that first meeting. It had to do with things that I was able to think out and understand only after our friendship was over. There was no mistaking the fact that Freud was emotionally involved in his sexual theory to an extraordinary degree. When he spoke of it, his tone became urgent, almost anxious, and all signs of his normally critical and skeptical manner vanished. A strange, deeply moved expression came over his face, the cause of which I was at a loss to understand. I had a strong intuition that for him sexuality was a sort of *numinosum*. This was confirmed by a conversation that took place some three years later (in 1910), again in Vienna.

I can still recall vividly how Freud said to me, “My dear Jung, promise me never to abandon the sexual theory. That is the most essential thing of all. You see, we must make a dogma of it, an unshakable bulwark.” He said that to me with great emotion, in the tone of a father saying, “And promise me this one thing, my dear son: that you will go to church every Sunday.” In some astonishment I asked him. “A bulwark—against what?” to which he replied, “Against the black tide of mud”—and here he hesitated for a moment, then added—“of occultism.” First of all, it was the words “bulwark” and “dogma” that alarmed me; for a dogma, that is to say, an indisputable confession of faith, is set up only when the aim is to suppress doubts once and for all. But that no longer has anything to do with scientific judgment; only with a personal power drive (p. 150).

Although I did not properly understand it then, I had observed in Freud the eruption of unconscious religious factors. Evidently he wanted my aid in erecting a barrier against these threatening unconscious

contents. The impression this conversation made upon me added to my confusion; until then I had not considered sexuality as a precious and imperiled concept to which one must remain faithful. Sexuality evidently meant more to Freud than to other people. For him it was something to be religiously observed . . . One thing was clear: Freud, who had always made much of his irreligiosity, had now constructed a dogma; or rather, in the place of a jealous God whom he had lost, he had substituted another compelling image, that of sexuality. It was no less insistent, exacting, domineering, threatening, and morally ambivalent than the original one. Just as the psychically stronger agency is given “divine” or “daemonic” attributes, so the “sexual libido” took over the role of a *deus absconditus*, a hidden or concealed god (p. 151).

Like flames suddenly flaring up, these thoughts darted through my mind. Much later, when I reflected upon Freud’s character, they revealed their significance. There was one characteristic of his that preoccupied me above all: his bitterness. It had struck me at our first encounter, but it remained inexplicable to me until I was able to see it in connection with his attitude toward sexuality. Although, for Freud, sexuality was undoubtedly a *numinosum*, his terminology and theory seemed to define it exclusively as a biological function. It was only the emotionality with which he spoke of it that revealed the deeper elements reverberating within him. Basically, he wanted to teach—or so at least it seemed to me—that, regarded from within, sexuality included spirituality and had an intrinsic meaning. But his concretistic terminology was too narrow to express this idea. He gave me the impression that at bottom he was working against his own goal and against himself; and there is, after all, no harsher bitterness than that of a person who is his own worst enemy. In his own words, he felt himself menaced by a “black tide of mud”—he who more than anyone else had tried to let down his bucket into those black depths.

Freud never asked himself why he was compelled to talk continually of sex, why this idea had taken such possession of him. He remained unaware that his “monotony of interpretation” expressed a flight from himself, or from that other side of him which might be perhaps called mystical. So long as he refused to acknowledge that side, he could never be reconciled with himself. He was blind toward the paradox and ambiguity of the contents of the unconscious, and did not know that everything which arises out of the unconscious has a top and a bottom, an inside and an outside. When we speak of the outside—and that is what Freud did—we are considering only half of the whole, with the result that a counter effect arises out of the unconscious.

There was nothing to be done about this one-sidedness of Freud’s. Perhaps some inner experience of his own might have opened his eyes; but then his intellect would have reduced any such experience to “mere sexuality” or “psychosexuality.” He remained the victim of the one aspect he could recognize, and for that reason I see him as a tragic figure; for he

was a great man, and what is more, a man in the grip of his daimon” (p. 153).

Continuing my work with Arthur I began to notice that even though his stories were unique, Arthur, and all my clients for that matter, exhibited the same qualities that Jung observed in Freud. There was something invisible or disguised, ubiquitous and yet durable about their behaviour. Their worlds were for them emotionally alluring and yet self-sabotaging and although this was elusive to them it appeared obvious to me. There appeared to be an insatiable need for keeping their unconscious world separate from their conscious world. As Jung suggested, it was as if there was something compelling emerging from the unconscious and the response was to ensure this was kept at bay.

Unlike Freud, Arthur’s story ended with Art overcoming a self-imposed limitation by paying attention to how he was feeling. The result was that “something shifted.” I was curious about this shift. I was also curious about Art’s psychological censoring, invisible to him, yet obvious to me. This psychological censor appeared vital, yet when Art began to not only hear, but also feel, his censor lost all of its power and Art’s perception of the world shifted.

Art’s censor was like a backward one-way mirror. This mirror reflected back to Art only what agreed with his worldview, while allowing those of us looking from outside the mirror to view Art unobstructed. The censor apparently convinced Art that only what he was seeing reflected back to him was real. Any light that penetrated from beyond was quickly extinguished. To experience life without this censor was to risk discovering the possibility that what he believed about himself was not true. The frame that kept this mirror in place was the fear that he might not be able to do anything about it. Entering this state was a very vulnerable place for Art and I suspected that at the bottom of this was Jung’s “compelling black tide of mud that emerges from those black depths of the unconscious.”

As I began watching for this censor I was continually amazed at how it was unseen by the host. Its mesmerizing effect was insidious such that clients were rarely capable of seeing and understanding their own neurotic behaviour.

The task of seeing beyond this deceptively reflective surface was usually impossible. Arthur's presence in my practice provided a unique opportunity to observe how it is possible to face the reflection that one can not see beyond and find a way to disrupt it, eventually finding a way to move beyond it.

I suspected that Arthur, Freud and my clients were feeling something very different from what Jung reported and what I observed, that they were working against themselves and were their own worst enemy. Instead they represented themselves as knowing their experience as correct, feeling misunderstood and wanting to help the others in their lives come to an understanding of what they (Arthur and my clients) were trying to convey. I suspected that the censor was allowed to dominate because of its ability to obscure the terrifying possibility that they were working against themselves and they might not be capable of changing this. I was not sure what would induce someone to disrupt this censor if the outcome required removing what protected them from this menacing breach. I did not have to wait long. Arthur returned to my office. He wanted to talk about being in a relationship and he told me another story.

Arthur Gets Squashed

My ex seemed to always attract other men. I do not know if this is true or I was just wary because of how we had begun our relationship when she was with someone else. Maybe I was just cued for this. There were times at the squash club when I saw her in conversation with men and she appeared to be so into the conversation and that it looked and sounded frenetic, and yet when I approached her, the conversation would shut down. I told her that when I saw this I felt humiliated and abandoned and a tension would rise up inside me, choking me. I learned to loath going to the squash court with her and I began to avoid this. I began to criticize her behaviour. I

told her how I felt when I believed she was lost in these conversations, how I felt that I did not have a partner and yet I still felt that I was obligated to behave as if I did have one. I would pressure her to change her behaviour all the while I was beginning to pull back from her. We started to fight. Our intimacy began to be just about hurt feelings. After a while the arguments lost their steam and there was just alienation. We kept saying that we loved each other and I believed it. I still do. We started to sleep apart and I eventually found another place to stay. We still talked a little. We still said we loved each other, but I was working hard to stay away.

Throughout all of this I hung onto my belief that she was not behaving appropriately. I believed my feelings of tension came from being in relationship with her. I liked being the center of her attention. When she devoted it to me I initially felt special. After becoming her partner, seeing her devote herself to others in this way made me feel terrible. I saw her behaviour as hurtful. I felt constant tension.

When I fall into the place of tension I feel this tightening deep in my chest. It makes its way up into my throat. It is as if I am choking and I am about to collapse into a ball. I withdraw. I try to disappear. I become sullen and I am reluctant to engage. I feel as if I am in a *no mans land* where I am stuck and I cannot move in any direction. I just get numb. Other times I try to debate or argue my way out of this place. "If she would stop making this move my behaviour would change. I would be less critical. If

she will try I will try. It is not sensible for me to change my behaviour. If I accept the situation and try to accommodate it I feel that I will become permanently numb." I still want to be in relationship with her, but she must stop making this move. Yes, I am critical, but I have good reason.

Whenever I bail from a relationship things calm down. I begin to get better. I exercise more. I feel better. Once I move through the suffering I reenergize. I move from thoughts of never being able to meet someone else and thinking that I am making a big mistake by leaving the present relationship to eventually meeting another wonderful person. I charge into the next relationship. Things are good for a while and then the tension begins to seep back in.

There is a difference this time. I do not want to run from these feelings. Yes, I am tired of the tension and the numbness, the humiliation, but I want this stuff to get resolved. I know that there is a pattern in my behaviour. I am so tired of my life feeling like a little boy is running it. I suspect that I create these breakups and while I have an intellectual understanding of this I cannot bring this information to bear when I feel I am in the grasp of this hurt little boy. If my little boy runs the show I am tired of the effect he has on my life. I have been right to suspect the behaviour of others at times, but I am tired of letting what I see lead to so much pain. I want to do something about this. I am tired of being so frightened of getting hurt that I will do anything to avoid it including ruining the relationship just so

I do not have to face the pain that I no longer want to feel and yet, I generate this pain in every serious relationship that I have been in by trying to avoid the tension. This is a vicious cycle and if the little boy is running the show the effect is ruinous for the adult. I have decided I am not going to avoid this anymore and tension be damned. I wanted to see someone about this and this is why I came to see you.

After this session I pondered Arthur's stories and his censor. When Arthur released himself on the squash court he caught a glimpse of a "part of himself that he had never seen before." One aspect of Arthur's psyche was fighting for control with another part and these pieces were often hidden from each other. Arthur's "little boy" was at times "in control" and yet the adult was finding ways to articulate his frustration with the effect of this child's actions. It appeared that the child and the adult, usually separated, were beginning to contact each other. It was only with great effort that one was revealed to the other and when this happened there was a counter effect or a momentary release from his tension. I began to suspect that a function of the censor was to keep different parts of the psyche hidden and separate from each other. I returned to Jung's reflections about the one-sidedness of Freud.

"Freud never asked himself why he was compelled to talk continually of sex, why this idea had taken such possession of him. He remained unaware that his "monotony of interpretation" expressed a flight from himself, or from that other side of him which might be perhaps called mystical. So long as he refused to acknowledge that side, he could never be reconciled with himself. He was blind toward the paradox and ambiguity of the contents of the unconscious, and did not know that everything which arises out of the unconscious has a top and a bottom, an inside and an outside. When we speak of the outside—and that is what Freud did—we are considering only half of the whole, with the result that a counter effect arises out of the unconscious.

There was nothing to be done about this one-sidedness of Freud's. Perhaps some inner experience of his own might have opened his eyes; but then his intellect would have reduced any such experience to "mere sexuality" or "psychosexuality." He remained the victim of the one aspect he could recognize, and for that reason I see him as a tragic figure; for he

was a great man, and what is more, a man in the grip of his daimon” (p. 153).

Jung’s assumptions about the unconscious appeared to fit with what was taking place for Arthur. Art’s “monotony of interpretation” expressed a flight from himself. Was Arthur’s dilemma that “he was blind towards the paradox and the ambiguity of the contents of the unconscious?” Is this the ultimate task of the psychological censor, keeping the inside from the outside? I suspected the censor might be responsible for repressing the unconscious resulting in consciousness appearing as the whole.

The fascinating thing about Arthur was that while he did exhibit this psychic censoring he was also attempting to disrupt it. His squash court revelation suggested that he was trying to release himself from his “monotony of interpretation.” Like Freud, Arthur was in the “grip of his daimon,” but unlike Freud, Arthur’s inner experience was surfacing. Whatever was taking place for Arthur it appeared to have an unconscious element, possibly the emergence of what Jung referred to as “his mystical side” and it was working to be heard. I wanted to help Art explore his unconscious.

Jung suggested that the unconscious presents itself to consciousness symbolically through dreams and Jung defers to Freud’s work on dream interpretation, specifically “The Interpretation of Dreams.” I was filled with trepidation. Leaving the comfort of the mildly diffracted shallow waters of consciousness for the barely penetrable murkiness of the unconscious was a challenge. I knew that we were not entertaining Freud, only his work, and yet I was worried about Freud’s ‘monotony of interpretation’ and his inability to see his own neurosis. I was concerned that the psychological censor might have limited Freud’s insight into dreams. None-the-less I did not know of any other way to access the unconscious, so we plunged in. We began exploring Arthur’s dreams.

Not Good Enough

I had a dream that I was walking up and down this street on which there were a few pairs of strange white cats. Each pair had staked out a section of sidewalk and as I walked past, the cats would move away and hiss at me. As soon as I passed they would take up their positions again. Each cat was perfectly white but each one had some noticeable deformity, such as a bent or broken paw. As I ventured down the street I noticed a half dozen people moving around an entrance to a building. I saw my ex was there along with a young friend of mine. As I watched them I noticed that they began to hold hands. As I continued to watch I began to feel the usual tension rise up from within. I really like this young friend. I feel a close connection with him. We seem to share a sensibility about the world. As I looked at myself I saw that I was covered up with a large khaftan. I looked colourful but I knew that underneath this I was overweight. As I continued watching them I began to feel that I was not worthy of this company. I felt I was not good enough for this relationship. This did not feel bad. It felt familiar.

When Arthur originally told me the story about his girlfriend at the squash club I asked him what he thought might happen, what the outcome might be, when she got "so into the conversation." He described humiliation and abandonment as what he was afraid of. I asked him if this dream was about humiliation and abandonment. He said he would think about it and let me know at the next session. At the next session I asked him again if his dream was about humiliation and abandonment. He said, "No. It is not humiliation that I am afraid of. I realize that I often put myself into situations that might lead to humiliation.

The tension that drives me is the belief that I am not good enough. When I feel this tension I suspect that I am in a situation in which I will be judged and I know I will come up short.”

Art’s tension was related to his feelings of not being good enough. Here was an articulate, accomplished, athletic human being that was haunted by a sense of not being good enough. This feeling was familiar territory. Most of my clients have expressed this feeling. I have also felt this from time to time. Whenever I reflect on my momentary sense of inadequacy I usually allocate its origin to some childhood experience. I suspected the same for Art and I asked Art if he experienced this feeling of tension in his childhood.

The Past

When this tension rises up in my throat it has this same flavour. No matter what I accomplish it is not good enough. I have a deep-seated belief that no matter what I do, what I accomplish, it will not be enough. You’re right. This tension originated in my childhood. If I got three A’s I could have had four. If I was top of my class I could have been better in athletics. When I was top of my class and captain of all my teams my hair was too long. I saw my older sister collapse under the same load. She went from pretty, fun and (shocking to me) desirable by my friends to someone that lost interest in her looks and most aspects of her life. She gained two hundred pounds. Only in her art did I see what I believed was the person I knew as my sister. The art was dark and was often a reinterpretation of family photographs. One piece that I will always remember was from a picture of my parents before we were born. Their arms were linked, they had big smiles on their faces and

they were taking a bite from each other's oversized lollipops. My sister painted everything as it was, except at the end of the lollipop sticks instead of candy there were the masks that represent comedy and tragedy covering the faces of my parents.

From Art's stories and dreams it appeared that he was driven by his fear of not being good enough. He would use whatever he could to protect himself from being found out, yet the fear of not being good enough is what pushed him to create the very situations that he ran from. When he first noticed the tension he would immediately blame the other for its presence. He would use whatever was available to protect himself from not being good enough, usually defaulting into an old protective stance. He became good at manipulating any tension filled situation so not to experience the agony of his youth when not being good enough was standard fare, yet paradoxically by doing this he continually recreated the very tension that he was trying to protect himself from.

We were now at a juncture. Did we work to manage Art's tension or did we continue to dig into the unconscious? I was no longer sure and so I asked Arthur what he wanted to do.

Permission

When I came for counseling I was concerned that you might not be able to help. You wanted to work in a way that I thought would not be successful for me. What I did take away from the first session was your statement that, "bringing up our issues and doing our work in the presence of others is usually very helpful." This I believe. You helped me locate my fear about feeling and connectedness. I want to stop recreating my fear. I do not want it anymore and yet whenever I put it down it returns. I do not know where we are going, but I have come too far to go back.

I have always wanted my clients to achieve some form of resolution and release from their suffering. I usually have some notion of what this looks like and how we are going to get there. In Arthur's case I was not so sure. He did not just want relief from his suffering. He wanted something more. I was beginning to suspect that a part of me wanted Arthur to not just manage, but actually absolve himself from his feelings of not being good enough as an example for the rest of us. The risk for me was that the line separating client and counselor would become lost. The therapeutic relationship might no longer be entirely focused on him, –it would also focus on me. This was a difficult moment for me. I could return to the relative safety of the counseling relationship working with Arthur to manage his feelings of not being good enough and maintain control over my part of the therapeutic process, or matching Arthur's courage in his exploration, I could grab on to letting go and plunge deeper into the exploration of the unconscious. Like Art I suspected we had come too far to go back and yet the desire to recapitulate was very strong. I suspected that if I surrendered to our exploration that I might have to give up my own sense of control. I could support, I could help navigate, but I could no longer guide our exploration from separate crafts. Crossing the line that separates client and counselor and tying them both together in the same craft is taboo. Art must have sensed my struggle because at this very moment he started into a relevant story.

The Call of the Herd

I met with a friend yesterday. We discussed my therapy. She was very enthusiastic, especially about the unconscious work. She was impressed with my "doing work that I could have so easily avoided." We continued to discuss the topic and I felt supported. We also talked about my interest in trying to get a starting spot in the 2002 Canadian Ironman Triathlon. I was concerned that my knees would be a problem, but I had seen a sports physiotherapist and he had given

me the green light to proceed. My friend's response was not positive. "It would be very hard on your knees," she said and "you might want to examine why you need to do things to such extremes." I did not feel supported and the subject was quickly dropped. She had polio as a child and some physical activities are closed to her. I suspect that this played a part in her response. I began to think about whether it was such a good idea to discuss the subject of athletics. My response was to move towards the subjects that she wished to pursue. I believe she was creating the conditions for me to act out my part in her world.

This came up again last night at the squash club. I have been training for the upcoming squash season and I have lost some weight. I was in the locker room and a fellow competitor asked me, "Why did you decide to take the weight off?" "To get faster on the court," I said. He responded, "You've always been fast on the court. You don't need to lose weight." I did not say anything and after a few seconds of silence he said, "You know I really want to lose weight but I am not very good at it." My thought was that he initially wanted me to be the same way that I was before, to be more like him. I withdrew from him at that point. He then shared the comment about trying unsuccessfully to lose weight and I felt an affinity for him. I know how hard it can be to lose unwanted weight. In both of these situations I felt drawn towards inclusion and exclusion. What is taking place?

We want the company of other people. We like the benefits of intimate relationships. We do not want the company of people that behave in ways that

undermine the possibility of developing trusting, loving relationships. Jung (1991) in his *Psychology of the Unconscious* addresses the dilemma, "Any system of philosophy, no matter how abstract, represents in means and purpose nothing more than an extremely cleverly developed combination of original nature sounds. Hence arises the desire of a Schopenhauer or a Nietzsche for recognition and understanding, and the despair and bitterness of their loneliness. One might expect, perhaps, that a man full of genius could pasture in the greatness of his own thoughts, and renounce the cheap approbation of the crowd which he despises; yet he succumbs to the more powerful impulse of the herd instinct. His searching and his finding, his call, belong to the herd" (p.16).

Arthur and I were both hearing the call of the herd, but its call was beginning to weaken. Art's story and Jung's insight strengthened my resolve. Like Art I now no longer knew where we were going and that was okay.

I was still curious about Art's little boy. I wondered if his little boy was the voice of the unconscious and if so what he might say to us. I asked Art to tell me about his little boy and how this boy interacted with the outer world.

The Little Boy

The little boy is not in control. He is never in control. When he makes contact he brings with him the tension. This is old familiar tension that announces his presence by causing my throat to constrict. He only responds. He is pushed by the past and responds to the present.

I have had contact with my ex. She came by to drop off mail. We entered into a discussion about reentering our relationship. She is not sure. She seems to be in a place of fear. She is unable to commit, yet unable to be fully out of this and I am left hanging.

This has been a pattern with us since my ex and I started going out. She appears unwilling to commit. She will agree to something then not fulfill her part. It is as if she does not commit or make a decision so she cannot be condemned for making a mistake. If she does not agree to anything how can she be held responsible for her actions? She often promises and rarely delivers. This has been the pattern from the beginning. I end up feeling that her fear is too overwhelming to commit to anyone; certainly not to me. Questions rise up: Why am I attracted to this? Why am I, or would I choose to be, in a relationship with someone that behaves this way? Am I not good enough to be with someone else? My self-esteem gets battered in this. My throat constricts. I have spent a lot of time with this tension.

Trying to work on my issues with this has been very difficult. I have not had much luck trying to remove the little boy's expectation that this time it will be different. She will continue to not commit all the while receiving validation from others. To be in this is a nightmare for me. I do not want this. Because I have not been successful consciously removing my need for something that will always cause me pain we have to try something else. I need your help.

I suggested we try to evoke some help from deep within Arthur. After spending part of the next session deepening our trust of each other I asked Arthur to give himself up to his inner world. I asked Arthur's little boy to help the unconscious tell us anything it would like us to hear. This is what emerged.

The Waking Dream

The image of my little boy is one of an inconsolable six-year-old. When he is approached he only wants the things he sees that are so wrong, changed. He wants them to stop and never come back. He is always on the verge of hysteria. When in this state he cannot be helped, I can only stand by him and wait. Support must come from somewhere else.

An older man appears and stands next to us. He asks me to let reason take a break, to let it rest for a while. He comforts my little boy. I know my little boy is safe. I wander off into a field of knee-deep grass, stirred by the wind. I find myself on a path. The path leads to a small river. I step in. The water moves around my feet. An ache in one ankle is soothed. I wade in deeper, up to my waist. I submerge. The river flows around me loosening the tension in my back and my neck, working all my aches free. I begin to drift. I start to relax. The river gets warmer and the current slows. I rise up and walk to the bank. A path leads into the woods. I follow it up a hill and around a bend. I see a thin spire of smoke. The path opens into a little clearing. In the middle is a cabin. The smoke rises from behind the cabin. I walk around and see the source of the smoke is a small fire. There is an old crone stirring something in a large cauldron. She invites me to come near. She offers me a spoon. I take a sip and the liquid floods into my body. She offers me a ladle. I take it and sit against a tree and slowly drink. I feel the elixir warm my insides. I feel strength begin to flow into me. This feeling

grows. I smile. I am becoming strong again. With every breath I become stronger, more sure. Confidence returns and then erupts into another smile. I rise up and thank the crone. I return to the path and make my way back to the caretaker and the little boy. I tell them both that everything is all right and that it is time for us to go. We are going elsewhere and we are not going to leave the little boy behind. His anguish is so deep there is no sound to his cry. I follow the caretaker and he leads us back to our tribe, all dressed in cloaks, and we begin to move. In the middle of the group is the little boy. We are all there. We move without talking. I feel strong. I feel safe.

As we emerged from this exploration, Art's little boy was still present, yet there were others now. Arthur did not yet know if there was change, but he didn't have to wait long to test his newly found strength. As soon as he left he plunged right back into his outer world. At our next session he returned with the results of his test.

The Test

I talked to my ex about where we are. She is not sure that she can be in this relationship. She says she loves me but she cannot go back to the way it was. I was too critical. I also cannot go back. I cannot live with someone that gives me her word and then breaks it. She cannot make up her mind about the relationship. She will "get back to me." A few days pass. I call her. She cannot make up her mind, again. She will get back to me. "When" I ask? She does not like the pressure, but she will let me know if she can be in the relationship by Sunday. She will let me know

either way. She drops in on Friday and is still not sure. We talk and she says she will definitely let me know on Sunday. She says she loves me and she would like to be in this but she is still scared. I tell her I am going away but I will be back by Sunday evening.

I phone and leave a message that if she is still too scared please just phone and leave a message Sunday morning that she cannot do this, otherwise if she believes that we can both do our work and get some help with the relationship, then call Sunday evening. I return home and there is not a message. The evening drags on for an agonizingly long time. I go to bed. At 10:40 the phone rings. A friend of hers calls. "She has been trying to get a hold of you, but she has not had any luck." "Where is she?" "Out of town." "When will she be back?" "I am not sure." "She said she needed to get away for awhile." "Are you all right?" "Yes." "Well, good-bye." I go back to bed.

I have been left hanging out to dry for a week. She will definitely give me her decision on Sunday, "because I gave you my word." Sunday has come and gone. This is how it has always been. She phones Monday at 8:00 AM. "I tried to call you but my cell phone could not get through. I was able to get hold of my friend and I asked her to let you know what happened. I needed to get away to think." This all sounds reasonable to me, but I am left with a legacy. I hear my voice. "You said that you would give me your decision on Sunday." Her response "This feels like I am being pressured."

This feels like abuse. I have told her how I feel, how I am trying to respect her need for time to make up her mind, but the waiting is painful. She understood and promised to let me know on Sunday. I have asked her so many times to think what it would be like to be in my place. She agrees sometimes that she has made mistakes, but she feels that I am way too critical. "It is important to accept your partner as they are," she says.

For her to promise to do something and not do it and to continue to do this when she knows how terrible I feel when she does not fulfill her commitments is not right. This is abuse. When she makes this move the constriction in my throat is so tight I can hardly breathe. I often see her throw herself at others, usually men, yet she seems to believe that it is okay not to deliver on her promises to me. "Why does she do this?" I do not want to feel this tension.

At first I could not get the conversations with my ex out of my head and so I went to bed. I was racked with tension and I believed I would have done almost anything to make it go away. I didn't know what to do so like you suggested I worked to bring my little boy into play. I began to slip in and out of consciousness. I had a vision of my tribe moving across a grassy field. My little boy again asked, "Why does she do this?" From my tribe came a voice. "Arthur, she tries to get from men the approval that her father never gave her. When she gets it she eventually rejects them, because this is not the approval she yearns for, this is not her father's

approval. If she never commits to anything she can never be condemned, she never risks disapproval. This will always make it difficult to be in relationship with her until she finds help and even then she will have to go very deep to fully see what she is doing and how this creates her unhappiness." "But she seems so beautiful and she seems so smart." "On the surface it looks good, yet she seeks validation from outside herself. She has given herself up to her teachers and to her relationships and has lost her own voice and without her own voice she has become very insecure."

I continue to walk with my tribe. "She sometimes agrees to things and does them and sometimes she agrees to them and doesn't do them," I say. A woman folds back her hood and smiles at me, "When we depend on the outside world to tell us what to do we lose our sense of what is right for us. We never know if the decision we have made comes from the outside world or from us. We become confused. We do not know what to trust." "Oh," I reply. "Why would I want to be with this person?"

A male voice responds, "Art, you want the world to give you what you never received. You want others to let you know that you are good enough. When you feel betrayed by this person you suspect that she believes you are not good enough. You then work hard to try and convince her to change her mind. If you can convince her to treat you differently you believe that you will stop feeling that you are not good enough. You are both children asking each other for validation that only an adult can give. Both of you need

validation yet it must come from an adult." "Oh . . . what adults do I ask?" "You ask us." "Why?" "Because we are members of the same tribe. We help each other." "Am I good enough?" "Yes, you are." We continue to walk and as I look back I see an angry little girl and an angry little boy both with very red faces. I turn away and we walk up and over a hill.

I talked to my ex again. She was still not sure if she can be in the relationship. She is feeling too much pressure. She thinks that she will have to say no. She says she loves me but this was too hard. Maybe in the future, when she feels stronger, it will work. I said, "I am not going to do this anymore. I must bring this to an end." Her reply, "So what you're saying is there is no more hope, again." "I have to go." I said. "I hope things go well for you. Good-bye."

I am struck by a number of things. I am doing some of the same things that I accuse my ex of doing. I notice that we behave in a similar fashion. We both appear to be searching for external fulfillment. When I reflect on the relationship I believe that it was not that good. There were problems from the beginning. I knew what I was in for and yet I proceeded and when things got so bad that I could not stand them I left. Yet even with the full knowledge that this was not what I wanted I persisted in considering, even chasing after her when I knew that I was going to be hurt again. Why?

Arthur's introduction of the unconscious to his conscious world was like watching an emerging butterfly breathe life into its newly found wings. He was

allowing his unconscious world to empower him and because of this he was developing the strength and the skill to untangle himself from the difficulties his protective childlike stance created. His outer world supplied the bait he needed to cast into his own menacing “black tide of mud” to hook into his unconscious. Even if he did not know it I suspected that he was opening up to the mystery of the human condition. Through the emotional turmoil of his relationships and the concerted rational exploration of his life Art had bridged the breach between his conscious and unconscious worlds. He had engaged the same mysterious, tumultuous interaction between the head and the heart described by the Buddhist scholar D.T. Suzuki (1963).

“Religion is the inmost voice of the human heart that under the yoke of a seemingly finite existence groans and travails in pain. Mankind, from their first appearance on earth, have never been satisfied with the finiteness and impermanency of life. They have always been yearning after something that will liberate them from the slavery of this mortal coil, or from the cursed bondage of metempsychosis, as Hindu thinkers express it. This something, however, on account of its transcending all the principles of separation and individuation, which characterize the phenomena of this mundane existence, has always remained as something indefinite, inadequate, chaotic, and full of mystery. And, according to different degrees of intellectual development in different ages and nations, people have endeavored to invest this mysterious something with all sorts of human feelings and intelligence. Most modern scientists are now content with the hypothesis that the mystery is unfathomable by the human mind, which is conditioned by the law of relativity, and that our business here, moral as well as intellectual, can be executed without troubling ourselves with this ever-haunting problem of mystery; — this doctrine is called agnosticism.

But this hypothesis can in no wise be considered the final sentence passed on the mystery. From the scientific point of view, the maxim of agnosticism is excellent, as science does not pretend to venture into the realm of non-relativity. Dissatisfaction, however, presents itself, when we attempt to silence by this hypothesis the last demand of the human heart”(p. 24).

I did not believe that Art’s dream was specifically a religious event for Art. I was soon to be proven wrong, but not in any way that I could have foreseen. For now I had to continue in my role as navigator offering up what little I could to

help Arthur silence his psychological censor. The censor seemed to gorge on single helpings of the conscious world, but was overwhelmed when both the unconscious and conscious worlds were in play. Arthur was becoming his own therapist by disrupting limits on the unconscious. My job was to suggest areas of exploration and the area of greatest disturbance for Arthur was his little boy's defensive stance. Arthur was his own worst enemy when under the little boy's defiant sway. He had picked this up from somewhere and I suggested that we look further into his past to see how it might be influencing his future. With this in mind I asked him to explore his roots. We dug into his relationships with his family.

The Source

I had not seen my father for a number of years. When we got back together we immediately reconnected. I have always found my sense of humour a little unusual yet the moment we came in contact after an absence it was obvious where it came from. My parents were married for 30 very unhappy years. My father separated from my mother and remarried. His second wife had a stroke 12 years into their marriage. My father was her primary caretaker for the last 2 ½ years of her life. Everyone marveled at how he looked after her. I asked him why he did it and he said "Arthur, the thirty years that I was married to your mother were agony for me. Every moment of my second marriage has been wonderful. I love this woman and any time I have left with her I cherish." Four weeks after she died my father got sick. When my sister forced him to go to the hospital they immediately opened him up and found that he was riddled with cancer. They wanted to start chemotherapy but the prognosis was dismal. I

talked to my father the day after surgery. He said, "Arthur, I do not want to do this. I have had a good life, especially the last few years. I am not going to go through with the therapy." That night he went to sleep and he never woke up.

I never really felt loss. I miss my father at times but I always remember his courage and his strength. I know that these are his gifts to me. Even through the funeral I never felt the grief that others were showing. I love my father and I always will. I understand his decisions; I hope they are the same ones I would make.

When I revisit my projections at the squash club I notice that when I believe I am not good enough it is apparent that in many ways I am good enough. I got great marks in school. My teachers thought I was good enough. I was a very good athlete. My coaches and my fellow teammates made me captain of my teams. They thought I was good enough. My father thought I was good enough. The only person that did not think I was good enough was my mother. I rarely remember anything being good enough for her.

My relationships with men are comfortable. When there is separation or change I accept this without much consideration. Only when I have an intimate partner with me do I feel at times that I am at risk from men. Only in an intimate relationship with a woman do I feel the anguish of my little boy. When the familiar tension rises in me, when I feel betrayed or when I suspect I am in a bad relationship, I try to locate the cause. I try to find it in the other or in

myself, yet I never seem able to fully rid myself of the familiar tension. It may go away for a while, yet it always returns. In my stories I describe what increases or decreases my suffering, but I never uncover the source of my suffering. My stories only point to my suffering, but they never reveal its source.

I stopped Art's story here for a minute to make these notes: Art's stories point towards something. They are, like his dreams, symbolic. His stories are symbolic because, as Art said, they only point towards his suffering, yet they keep the source hidden or obscured. His dreams are symbolic "in order that they cannot be understood; in order that the wish, which is the source of the dream, may remain unknown" (Jung, 1991, p.12). It is as if the unconscious knows the source of the pain that we wish to hide from and symbolically reintroduces it back into consciousness. The source of pain remains close and yet not entirely debilitating. The unconscious protects us while offering insight into our suffering. I asked Art to continue.

I have not been able to locate the source of the pain because it has been hidden. I believe that the reason that I cannot find it in the relationship with my partner is because that is not where the source of my suffering lies. I suspect it is located in my relationship with my mother. I believe I want my partner to provide the love and support that I never received from my mother. I want my partners to give me the unconditional love that I believe a mother should provide. I suspect that in some deep place there is a blank space where the love that my mother should have provided has not been filled. I want my partner to fill this void and it must be filled in a way that makes sure I will not have to go through the pain I

felt as a child. I want to make sure that my partners will never make me feel like I am not good enough. I am trying to make someone else provide me with something I have never seen and do not know what it looks like. I also want to make sure that I do not suffer the treatment I received as a child.

I appear to want from my partner the love that my mother never gave me. When my partner fails to give me the love that is not hers to give I reestablish contact with feelings of not being good enough. I then find ways to make my partner responsible for making me feel my tension because she is withholding the love I need from her even though she cannot possibly provide it. Blaming the other for something that is not their responsibility inevitably turns any potentially good relationship into a bad one.

I am also willing to enter into a relationship that I know will not be good for me because I will risk almost anything if there is a hint that I might receive the love that my mother never gave me. I will stay in it long after it is obvious that it is not good because if I abandon the pursuit of my mother's love I risk reintroducing the feelings of not being good enough. When I finally do leave I end up blaming the other for not being good enough. This effectively shifts the source of my feelings from the love I never received from my mother to the inability of the other to provide me with the love that I demand, effectively obscuring the source of my pain. I then reestablish the search for another person to provide me with the love I never received guaranteeing that I will repeat

the scenario with my next partner. Therefore every intimate female relationship I pursue in this manner is doomed to fail at some point.

When I invoke Occam's razor an additional explanation of my behaviour appears. When my ex gave her word and did not follow through I began to distrust her. As her behaviour continued it reinforced my belief that she was untrustworthy. It was not possible to build a trusting relationship based on this foundation. I liked some aspects of my ex but they were not enough to overcome my desire for trust in my partner.

I want the company of other people. I like the benefits of intimate relationships. I just do not want the company of people that behave in ways that undermine the possibility of developing trusting, loving relationships.

Art was beginning to induce all his players to reveal their positions and by so doing his self-knowledge was increasing. He was releasing himself from the control of his censor and this self-knowledge was expanding the scope of his vision. He was venturing deeper into the treasure house of his unconscious and in turn the unconscious was rewarding him with greater knowledge about his way-of-being in his world. With this in mind we continued to explore his dreams.

Turbulence

I was getting ready to get into a kayak by the side of a river. The riverbank was steep and the current fast. I thought I saw my spray deck floating in the river and I reached for it. It turned out to be a piece of bark. By reaching for it I inadvertently let the boat slide into the current. The cockpit got

submerged and the boat took on water. I grasped onto the boat and was slowly pulled into the water. I had the boat's grab loop in my right hand. With my left hand I was trying to grab onto the shore. The shoreline was steep and I ended up in the current. As this was happening my boating partner dove into, and under, the water. He stayed submerged. I worked my boat into a back eddy down stream, but this was difficult because my left arm was not functioning properly, it felt powerless.

Something from deep within the river surfaced. I was trying to pull my kayak to shore when I felt a bump on the other end of my boat. I could see that an otter was bumping the submerged end of the boat. I tentatively played with the otter, allowing it to bump the end as I played the boat back and forth in the water. I waded into the water and submerged.

The river is my unconscious. I saw my friend as fearless as he leapt deep into the current of the unconscious. I slowly submerged into the unconscious only after I examined some of the obstacles just below the surface. On the one hand I am leaping into the unconscious, on the other I am cautious. On the one hand I am fearless, on the other I am subdued. Both of these approaches to the unconscious are available to me. I identify most with the cautious one although I am trying to embrace the fearless leaper.

Arthur was trying hard to release himself from his psychological censor and by so doing he was paradoxically seeing it for the first time. He was doing his own dream work now and he was opening up to the possibility of self-

understanding. By using his dream world he was beginning to break free from the bondage of his own projections.

The Dream of the Angry Red Haired Child

I was sitting in a lounge chair at the boundary of my property. A young red-haired girl, approximately six-years old, came bounding up to me and yelled that her family hated me, especially her grandfather. She began running around my chair, yelling and throwing dirt and stones at me.

She lived with her family in the house on the property that bordered mine. I walked up to her house to look for her mother. I walked around to the back of her house and her older sister, an ex-girlfriend of mine, appeared on a bicycle. She was dressed in a long skirt and a lovely blouse. She radiated elegance. She stopped her bike and then she fell over. The combination of elegance and falling off her bike was odd. When I told her about the behaviour of her sister she became angry with me. In her anger she completely dismissed my concern about her sister's behaviour. I went back to my chair. The little red-haired girl returned and started yelling again. "We all hate you," she said. I phoned her mother and explained what was happening. Her mother said, "If you touch my young daughter I will kill you." She started yelling hysterically. I contacted a social service agency and they came and observed the young girl. They confronted my neighbours. The neighbours focused on their hatred of me to the point where the social worker threatened to take the young child away. The family would not

give up their hatred of me. They were willing to give up their child rather than focus on correcting their own behaviour. Their hatred was going to cost them their daughter.

The people in my dream were recognizable. I tried to understand their hatred based on what I knew of these people. I could not reconcile these people with their behaviour. I was left with a confusing and conflicting mess. I next tried to examine the characters as different parts of myself and my dream began to make sense.

When I am blinded by my hatred there are dire consequences that I am usually not aware of until it is too late. At times I may appear to be elegant, like the ex on the bike, but when I give in to my anger then I am not elegant (the fall from the bike). If I do not give up my anger I am at risk of losing what I cherish most (the family almost lost the young girl when the social worker threatened to take her away).

Blind hatred fuels a part of my life. If I do not learn to recognize it and let it go I am never free from the distress it inflicts on my life. I am most often ignorant of my hatred, yet my world informs me when it is present.

When interpreting my dream I initially projected the responsibility for the feeling of anger that pervades the dream onto the other characters and yet this did not bring understanding. When I look outside myself for the source of my feelings I am left with confusion and tension. I initially hide from what I am reluctant to see, but I do not hide very well. The

projecting and hiding are properties of my psychological censor. When I project onto the other I am evoking the censor. By evoking the help of the unconscious I locate the source of my tension and am released from my censor and this dissipates my tension.

Arthur was not completely free from his censor, but he was leading a much richer life than when we first met. He was free to explore the world in ways that enriched the meaning of his existence. His moments of tension returned, but now they were just that, moments. He continued to come and see me although I believed this was more for me than for him. He was doing his own work now and I suspected he was coming more to show me what was possible and less to have me help him find his way. I was present for what I now believe to be his most significant transformative moment and like the others it began with his description of a dream.

Reaching for the Quest

I was in a small self-contained single room. I was there with a partner and one other person. I was playing around with objects and I came upon a square vase. The vase was about 5" across and 10" deep. It was thick sided and the sides had cracks. The outer surface was green, the top border was red and the inside was black. The vase was attached to a dark stone that had cracks running through it. The vase had one side that had been attached to another vase, but the other vase had been broken away. This side was the colour of plaster. There was a note attached to the vase that said "Sorry for the state of this."

I began to play with the vase and as I was throwing it about, my partner said "careful!" At this

moment the vase fell from my hands and broke on the ground. I looked at the third person in the room and apologized. He did not say anything. I felt a sense of guilt that was directed towards him yet I also felt resentment, feeling unjustly accused because the vase had already been in a "sorry state."

The green exterior of the vase is my fundamental nature, which I experience as familiar, comfortable and safe. I look for this comfort in my "external" world and migrate towards it. The black interior is the abyss of the unconscious. This abyss is the source of things that are overwhelming, frightening or unknowable that rise up from within me, the things that are of me but I do not understand or like. These things frighten me. I am also on the lookout for them in the "external" world, but usually only so I can repel or run from them. The thick red rim is the blood that bonds these things together. This is also the blood that separates and holds them apart. The cracks in the vase are my imperfections. The other person in the room is my god. I created this god to explain the things that I find inexplicable and to have someone to blame for the things I do not want to be responsible for.

My feeling of guilt came not from the breaking of the vase in which my nature and the contents of the abyss are bonded together, but from the breaking away from needing a god as my creator.

In my not entirely inadvertent breaking of the grail I am wrestling for release from my own imperfect

creation. This was about breaking apart from what I believe I am.

When I first appeared here I saw myself as complete, yet broken. I now know that what I saw was only one piece of many parts and when a piece appears whole it must be examined before it can find its place in a greater whole. I have felt incredibly vulnerable on this journey and yet this "vulnerability" was an indication not of an at-risk condition, but of opening to my questing and staying with what comes into that openness. If there was risk, it was risk of further enlightenment, and this is a very tender place.

After working with Arthur there was only one thing I suspected, and that was that I didn't know anything for certain. If we are open, what comes to us is not what we expect--it may be better or worse. Our task is to be open to what comes. Arthur was now living out this very old teaching. When I shared this observation with Arthur he replied as follows.

The Emergence of a Human Being

I agree with you that from the place of opening what comes to us is not what we expect. I am uncertain about whether it "may be better or worse." From the place of disruption I have a difficult time accepting anything as unique. It appears to come connected to its opposite.

As I reach for a rose to smell its fragrance I am cut open by its thorn. I experience the rose as it is presented to me. When I strip the rose of its thorn I am demanding to experience it in the way I believe it should be. It is now a technology. When I open to what the rose might be it is both better and worse than I

expected. From the place of uncertainty what comes to me is not what I expect. It appears to be both better and worse.

If the natural growth and transformation of human beings is possible the need for you to show me the way is unnecessary. The reason for the mentor, shaman, priest, teacher, healer, therapist must be that I have forgotten or lost touch with my ability to engage in natural growth and transformation. My need for someone else to show me the way is because I believe I am lost. The deep yearning that I feel and that I try to fulfill by reaching for something outside myself is how I stay lost. When I separate the yearning from the external I am left with the feeling that the yearning is reaching for something deep within. Opening to what the yearning is reaching for is opening to my quest(ion). This quest is the return of natural growth and transformation.

I came into this world with the need to answer a question. I believed the answer was written in stone. I have spent my life looking for that stone. I thought my only task was to find the stone. I now know that my task was to open to the quest.

This quest has brought me to a place where I see that opposites are one. Good and evil, seen through the lens of the psychological censor diffract into separate parts that each appear as whole and unique unto themselves, yet when observed from this place of integration they appear as two parts of a greater whole rooted to whoever brings them into being. They

are no longer "better" or "worse." They now appear as both better and worse.

Arthur described his last dream as his release from faith. This was the transformative religious experience that I could never have seen coming. He had found a way to stand in the onslaught of his own fear and grab hold of his shadow and he embraced it in a way that released him from the creation of his own suffering.

I scheduled one last meeting with Arthur. I arrived early to prepare myself for our final exploration. I waited for a few minutes past our appointed time and was feeling a little anxious so I asked my assistant if Arthur had called in to change our appointment. My assistant gave me a puzzled look and asked me, "Arthur? You have never had a client named Arthur." For a moment I was startled, and then from somewhere deep inside a feeling of tension flooded upward. It got caught for a moment and then it welled out of me as I wondered: had I too only ever existed as a dream?

After Words

Following the defense of this thesis I was asked to make a few minor changes to my thesis document. For the most part these were simple; changes to the abstract, shift a few comments, change a word or two, but there was one change that wasn't really a change. It was a challenge. The request was: "Write an afterword in which you theorize disrupting a state of knowing, including reference to the key words from your title, and discuss the difficulties of representing this work in the academy, your choice of a performative mode, and the fit of this work in the ecology of academia."

I responded with:

My thesis *is* a theorizing of disrupting a state of knowing, using a performative mode. I did not choose a performative mode. A performative mode emerged after I exhausted exploration of both quantitative and qualitative methods. I did not choose the method. The method chose me. My use of a performative piece was an attempt to explicate the disruption of the state of knowing that I am in and yet so often blind to. I try to show how to escape the state of knowing without ever really experiencing it. It becomes known only after it is gone. This was only possible by trying to show the state as it is and then show it unfolding and show it shifting. To theorize about it is to try to get a hold of it without having to disrupt it. This creates the embedded state of knowing that I cannot see and yet I yearn to escape from. The fit of this piece in the academy is where the desire to confront ones own fear is more powerful than the fear of public humiliation. The difficulty of representing this work in the academy arises because the academy is a good representation of what I am trying to disrupt!

My response was not satisfactory. It was suggested that I was trying to get out from under a question that was imposed on me. I understand this. I feel that the academy is trying to get out from under something that it has imposed upon itself. Regardless, I still needed to find a way to address the request.

I decided to let the unconscious help me with this problem. I dreamt. I was in a large white chamber. The walls were smooth. The chamber was lit from within, but I could not see the source of the light. There were five very small

tunnels in the walls. These appeared to be the only way in or out of the chamber. Peering into them I noticed that each had a slight upward incline that led to a dead end. Each tunnel then appeared to go left or right. These tunnels would be just big enough to squeeze into. I did not like the looks of them at all. I wondered how I could ever have gotten in here in the first place. Those tunnels would have been almost impossible for me to get through.

I sat down on the floor of the chamber and began to wonder what I was doing here. After a while I became aware of another presence. Off to one side, in the shadows of the chamber, was coiled a very large snake. The snake was deathly still. Its eyes were open and the snake appeared aware that I was in the chamber, but it did not move a muscle. It just continued to look at me. I divided my attention between the snake and the small tunnels. It slowly became apparent to me how I came to be here. Somehow that snake had pulled me through one of those small tunnels. It had delivered me to this room.

I was convinced that the snake wanted to eat me and yet it seemed reluctant to try to eat me while I was conscious. I had a choice, I could either stay awake until the snake died (unlikely) or crawl up one of the small tunnels and out of the chamber. One of the tunnels must have led outside. That was the only explanation for how I got into the chamber, but I suspected that at least three, if not four, of the tunnels were dead ends.

The tunnels were so small that if I started into one I would not be able to turn around. Once I was committed I had to go right to the end. I might be able to crawl backwards, back into the chamber, but if the snake were behind me I was finished. I kept thinking over and over, "why doesn't the snake just eat me now." As I sat looking at the snake and thinking about getting trapped in one of the tunnels it occurred to me why the snake did not eat me while I was still breathing. The snake was counting on me going into one of the tunnels. If I started into one of the tunnels that led to a dead end the snake would use its body to block off my retreat. It would then excrete its digestive fluids into the cavity. This would drown me and begin the digestive process. When I had decomposed enough the snake would ingest its meal.

The tunnels had been designed with a number of dead ends. Even if the victim initially took the right passageway there were a number of choices within each tunnel that led to these dead ends so the victim would have to be very lucky to escape. The snake would just follow until the victim chose the wrong passage.

Sitting there I began to ponder my choices. Going into any of those claustrophobic tunnels was a frightening proposition, with or without a snake coming after me. I could attack the snake, but the snake was much larger than I. I knew it would just repel me, yet if I wanted to survive I had no choice. I had to choose.

I stir from my sleep. I open my eyes and think about the academy question. This place of no choice, but to choose, is a fundamental feature of life in the academy. If you are going to survive you must commit to a research question. You must choose a methodology. Mainstream or alternative, you still must choose. Choosing to survive, at least for a while, is a constant companion. You can make an inappropriate choice. You can crawl down the wrong tunnel. At some point you must commit to a course of action regardless of the outcome. What is the best choice?

Alternative forms of research are just that, alternatives. Qualitative research continually fights for validation, usually by pushing off the dominant discourse. Positivist methodology is the foundation from which all forms of research are measured. How often does one hear how positivist research is “not the only valid form of research?” Rarely does qualitative research speak in a way that is not foreshadowed by positivist methodology. While researching papers that might help validate my choice of a performative mode I was bombarded with titles like “Daredevil Research,” and “The Promise and Perils of Alternative Forms of Data Representation” and “Narrative Rationality in Educational Research.” The authors all offered their chosen methodology as a good or better alternative to the norm, but there is risk in choosing an “alternative.” All seem to be trying to escape the dominant discourse. The ecology of the academy demands that one commit to a methodology and if not the dominant discourse than one must fight for the validity of one’s choice. Not to choose, or to choose a method

that flies in the face of convention, is to risk choosing the wrong tunnel. Yet when one finds oneself alone in the chamber of academia, the well-worn tunnel does not necessarily lead to freedom. It often leads to absorption.

To pursue a topic that is of great, or even grave, personal interest opens one to the possibility of not being in control. Having the topic emerge as the research is ongoing and recognizing the method only after the work is finished is not conventional research methodology, but it is authentic research. To stay open to whatever emerges while staying committed to what is compelling regardless of the consequence is the spirit of inquisitiveness that drives discovery. The risk is great, but the reward is greater.

I fall back into sleep and back into my dream. I realize now that if I commit to a course of action the snake will move. The snake knows it has me. My chances of not doing what the snake wants me to do are very small. If I do not move, the snake has me. If I choose the wrong tunnel, the snake has me. If I panic and freeze the snake has me. I need to find a way past this; there must be a way. I need to find a way to explore those tunnels without the snake following me. There must be some way that I can block off the tunnel and keep the snake at bay. I look over the chamber. The walls are hard and perfectly smooth, the colour of ivory. If I am going to survive I must find a way to avoid the snake and explore the tunnels. I check my pockets; all I have are my wallet and keys. I need to think. Somehow if I can create a barrier at the entrance of a tunnel after I am in I can crawl backward while keeping an eye out for the snake. If the snake tries to get past the barrier I can quickly crawl back to meet it and fight my way back into the chamber.

I decide to use my jacket as the barrier. By driving a key through the jacket and into the wall I can anchor the jacket over the tunnel entrance. Five keys should do it. As I back into the tunnel I can see the snake begin to stir. I get the jacket in place and crawl back a few feet and wait. I hear a small scrape of flesh on fabric as the snake's tongue tests my barrier. I can see an outline of its nose as it presses into the fiber. I get ready to crawl back out, to meet the snake if it gets past my jacket. I am terrified. I hold my breath and wait. The snake tests my

boundary. Please hold. The snake pushes. It pushes again. I begin to shake. The jacket holds. Slowly I begin to crawl backwards. I stop and wait for a minute. It seems like an hour. I no longer hear the snake testing. I continue to crawl backward. I hit a dead end. I turn right, backwards. I hit another dead end. I crawl forward to the junction. I back into the other arm of the tunnel. It is blocked. I have to go back into the main chamber, again. I crawl toward the tunnel entrance and test for the snake. The snake is not pressed up against my jacket. I pull one of the keys out and peer inside the chamber. The snake is coiled back in its old position. I make my way across the chamber floor and into the next tunnel. I go through the same procedure, but this time I have a little more confidence. I wait for the snake, but not in terror. The snake does not test my barrier. I make my way backwards up the tunnel. I feel the junction and take the left turn. This ends in another junction. I turn left again. I continue to work my way backwards and upwards. In moving this way I realize I do not know where I am going I only know what I am moving away from. Slowly the tunnel begins to fill with something sweet. I realize that I am breathing unfettered air. It tastes so sweet. I emerge backwards. I do not now where I am, but I do know that I am no longer where I do not want to be. I cannot believe it. Somehow I found my way out.

I wake up.

I think again about the question. How does my choice fit in the ecology of the academy? I believe that the academy creates the tension that motivates change. This change comes as resistance to conformity. Much like finding myself in the chamber, I did not choose narrative. I did not choose autobiographical research. These tools emerged as I dug myself out from the compelling need to understand.

When I began this journey I believed that consciousness was unique. I did not realize the importance of the unconscious. I did not know that it was possible to disrupt the boundary that separated consciousness and the unconscious. I thought that dreams were dismissible. I desperately tried to find my way to express what I needed to express, yet I did not know which tunnel might lead to the surface.

I tried to force my research into a conventional package, but it would not fit. My research topic and my methodology emerged as I emerged. The more I resisted the stronger the desire to understand became. My search for knowledge, regardless of the personal risk, was fundamental to my success. I believe that the way this thesis unfolded was unique to me. That it had to unfold and follow its own course is the way of the academy. In these ways it was both unique and yet, traditional.

This thesis fits in the place of all authentic research. It is highly personal, yet it produces knowledge, a knowledge that emerges in the only way it can, using whatever method it can find. It fits in the place in the academy reserved for research that is born of immense desire. It is the offspring of resistance to conformity and this is the ecology of academia.

Overview

Consciousness, or a sense of self, arises as an effect of the interplay between external events and experiences, and the meaning, or feelings, ascribed to them. When this understanding is obscured or lost, confusion about the origin of feelings ensues. The result is to blame the external world for how one feels, producing a deepening dissatisfaction with life. To reestablish agency in the generation of ones-own-feelings a counter effect must be introduced. This requires the evocation of repressed or unconscious elements. Neither conscious or unconscious elements can be accessed directly; they emerge from a dialogue between reason and feelings, essentially an internal meaning making narrative. Exploration and alteration of consciousness requires the explication and disruption of this internal narrative. This thesis is a performance of a fictionalized psychotherapeutic intervention, where this narrative is explicated and disrupted resulting in a shift in the conscious experience of the participants.

Introduction to Conscious-Unconscious Interactions

Navigating the abyssal waters of personal growth Arthur and his therapist achieved what so many fail to achieve. By disrupting the boundary between consciousness and the unconscious they disrupted the ego and broke away from its debilitating effects emerging as a more fully integrated human being. Using Arthur's journey of discovery, the following figures illustrate the key elements in disrupting the boundary between consciousness and the unconscious. Figures 1 and 2 represent the "state of knowing" that Arthur was in when he first came for counseling. Figures 3 and 4 trace Arthur's approach to the boundary separating conscious experience and the unconscious. Figures 5 and 6 suggest the outcome of continuing to resist the offerings of the unconscious. Figures 7 and 8 signify the outcome of opening to the mystery, regardless of the consequences.

Figure 1

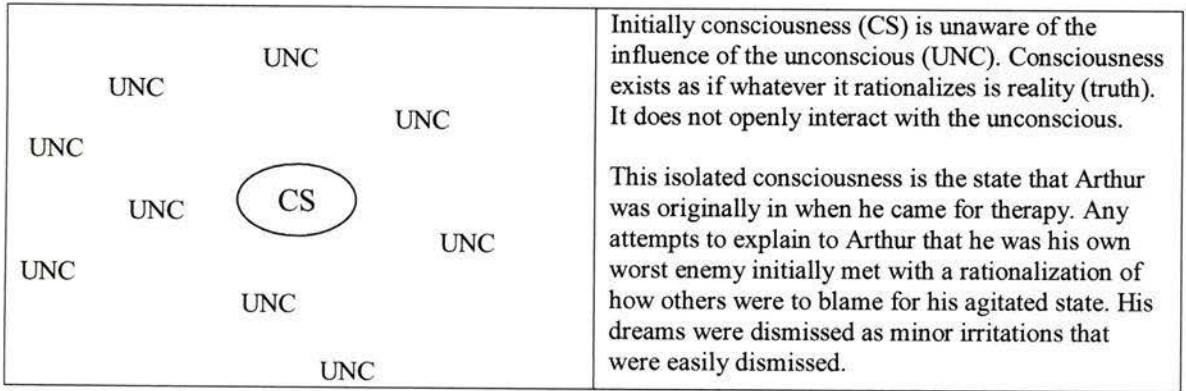


Figure 2

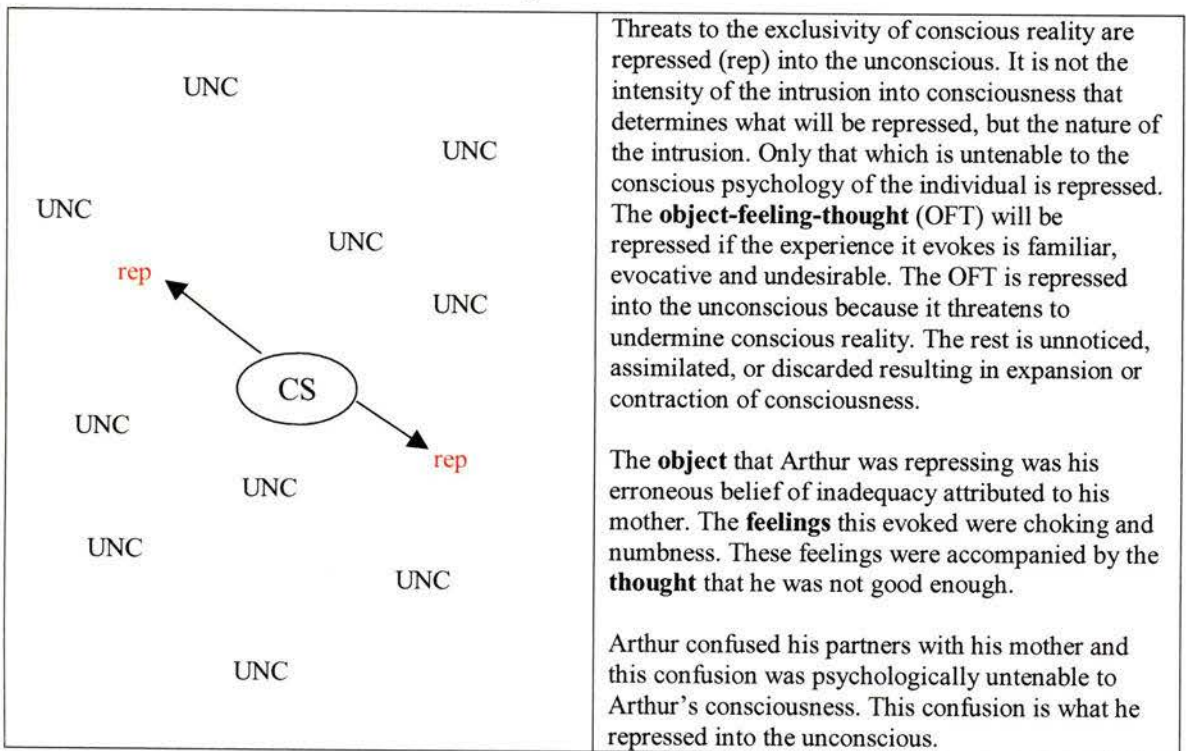


Figure 3

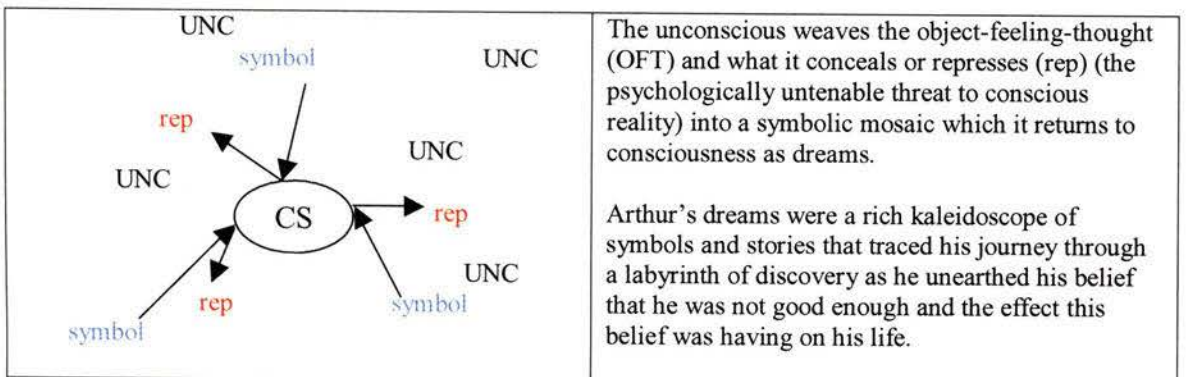


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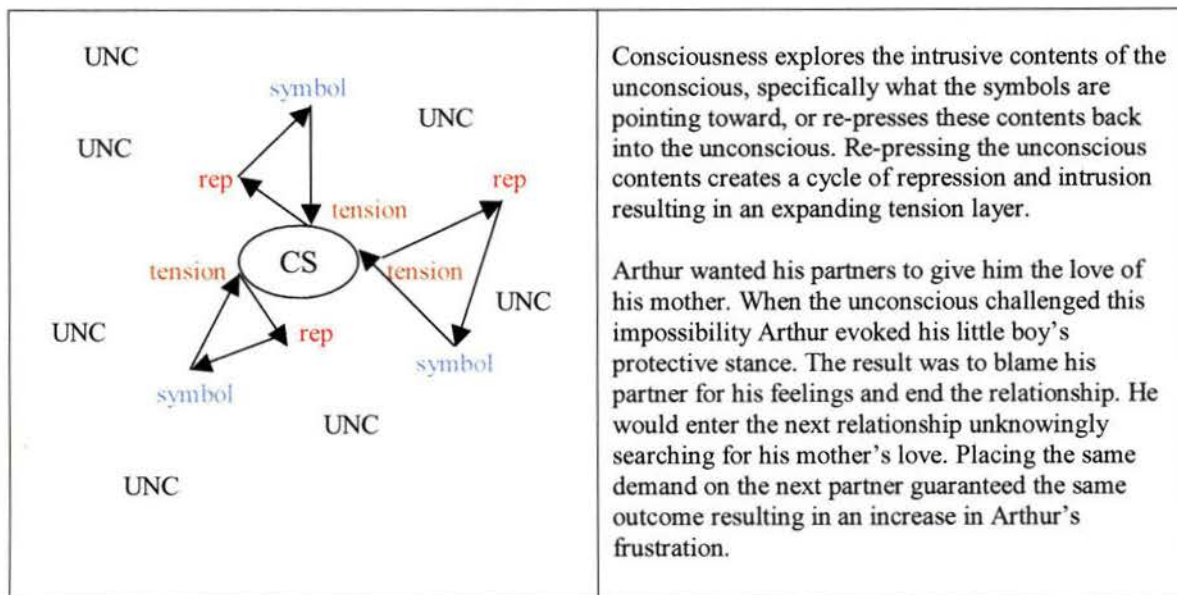


Figure 5

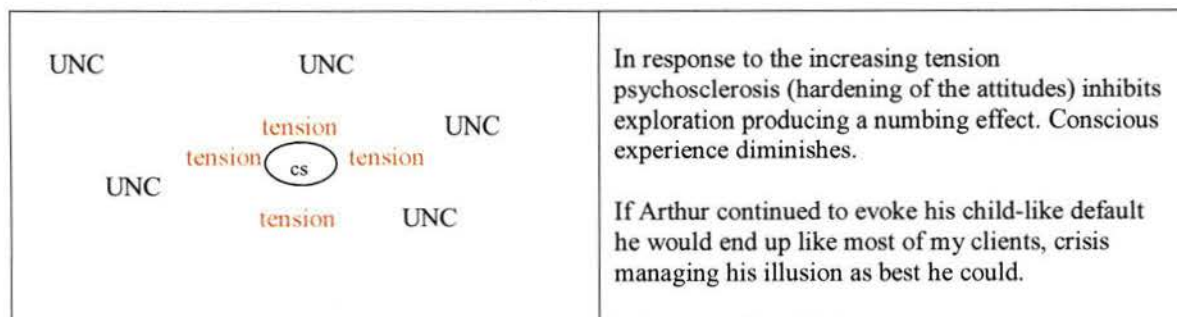


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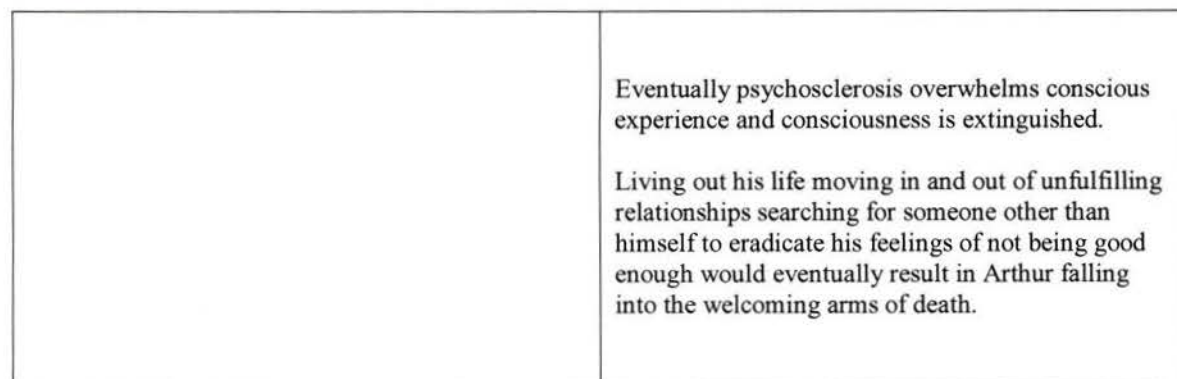


Figure 7

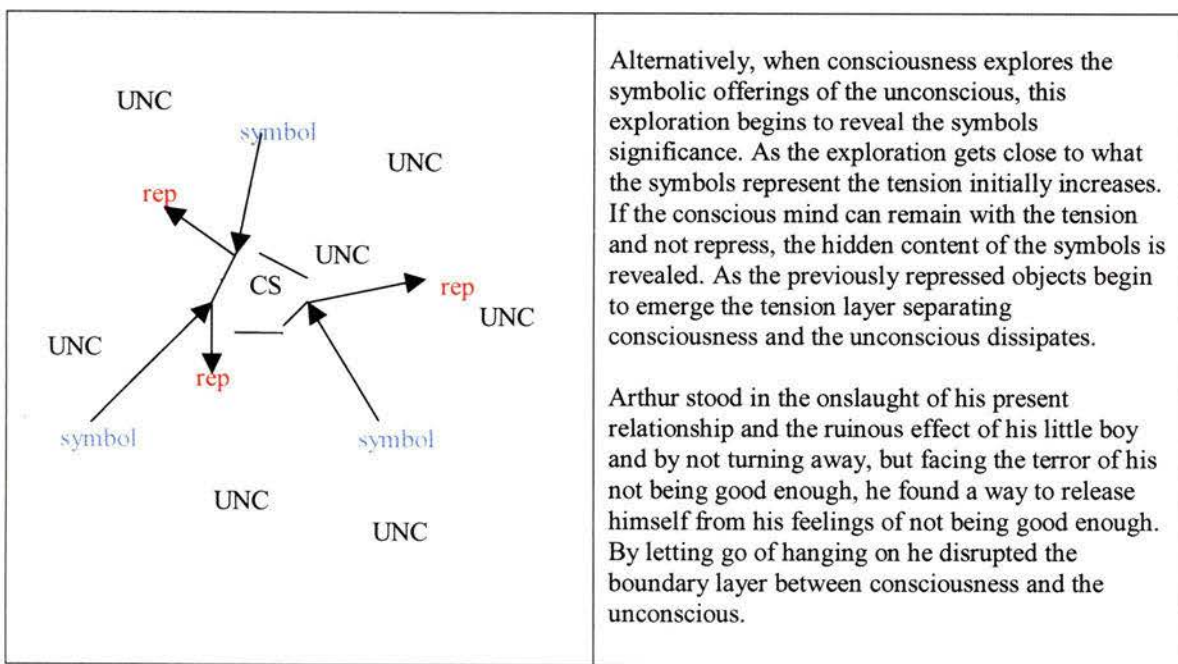
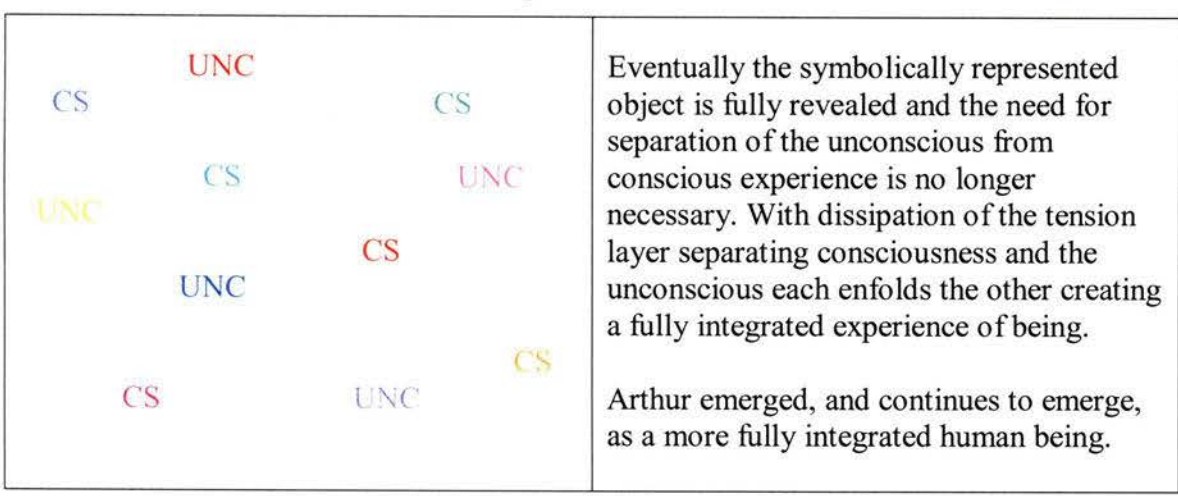


Figure 8



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Title of Thesis:

The Emergence of a Human Being
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Author



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December 20, 2002