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Newsletter of the C.G. Jung Foundation of Ontario

ISSN 1918-6142

Chiron is a newsletter that exists to support the work of the C.G. Jung Foundation of Ontario. It was established in 1980, and has existed in electronic form since 2006. Its name and masthead image, adopted at that time, are drawn from ancient Greek culture. In Greek mythology, Chiron was the last centaur, a son of the titan Cronus. He was famed for his wisdom, knowledge and skill at deciphering the will of the gods, to healing effect.

Volume 30, No. 3 Spring (May) 2011

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JUNGIAN VIEWS ON BURNING ISSUES, 2011: SOUL MATTERS

May 28th, 2011, 1 – 4 pm at 223 St. Clair Ave West

FREE TO MEMBERS

LIMIT OF 30, REGISTRATION REQUIRED

The world continues to stumble forward, experiencing evermore man-made dilemmas that suggest we have “lost soul.” We now face the aftermath of a global economic meltdown, mounting ecological crises and widespread political turmoil. Have we abandoned soul or has it left us? Maybe these shaky times are just the growing pains of an evolving world, or perhaps the “rough beast” of our soul-sucked *psyche* has now sprung fully into being.

Just where and what is Soul in 2011 ... and how does it figure into what matters?!

On Saturday May 28th at 1:00 p.m., three Analysts will each give brief perspectives on Soul to stimulate an open discussion and exploration of Soul Matters. We really want to hear what you have to say about *psyche* and will provide an engaging facilitated forum that will help you explore what matters to you! We hope to see anyone who would welcome the chance to spend time with their Jungian friends and enjoy some provocative ideas and discussion. Refreshments will be served.

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SURVEY SAYS!

We are still fielding response from our recent online survey to members and friends of the C. G. Jung Foundation of Ontario. To date we have over 160 responses, with a respectable 27% response from our mailing list.

While the following results are not final, they provide a good indication of some of the preferences of our friends and members.

Not surprisingly, respondents are chiefly attracted to the Foundation and its events by their presiding interest in C.G. Jung, the intellectual challenge, their interest in psychology and their need for spirituality or 'soul food.'

While lectures and Chiron are the most followed formats, we find that dreams lead the list of topics (94%) of interest followed by Jungian topics (92%), myths (91%) the application of Jungian thought to current topics (88%) and Fairy Tales (83%).

What attracts you to the Foundation and its events?

A presiding interest in CG Jung	83%
Intellectual stimulation/challenge	80%
Interest in psychology	77%
Spirituality/nurture for the soul	71%
Learning	67%
Companionship with like-minded people	58%
Learning the basics of Jungian psychology	48%
Curiosity	39%
Good friends are members/participants	17%
Entertainment	17%

Interest in content or topics for program courses or events

Dreams	94%
Jungian topics	92%
Myths	91%
Application of Jung's ideas to current day topics	88%
Fairy Tales	83%
Jung's Red Book	79%
Film	76%
Courses on the basics of Jungian psychology	75%
Events with cultural content (fine art, expressive arts, music,)	74%
Creative expressions (hands-on workshops with art media: paint, drama, clay, collage, etc.)	70%
Religion	67%

What are events/resources you participate in or would consider during an average year?

	Never	1 - 2/year	3 - 4/year	5+/year
Lectures	5%	36%	32%	28%
Chiron, Foundation newsletter	12%	33%	28%	27%
The library	32%	39%	12%	18%
The bookstore	25%	52%	10%	13%
Seminars	10%	61%	21%	9%
Workshops	14%	62%	15%	8%
Social gatherings	42%	49%	5%	3%

When the final results are all in we will report back to you in more detail ... along with the announcement of who won the draw for the Red Book!

Thank you again for your generous feedback.

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NEW ANALYST: MURIEL MCMAHON

Editor's note: we have a new member of the Ontario Association of Jungian Analysts. Muriel McMahon trained with the new Institute in Zürich and lives in Guelph. Here she introduces herself – and, more broadly, the work of an analyst – uniquely:

As a storyteller, I am surprised that I turn to this task of autobiography with resistance. “Never let the truth stand in the way of a good story” so say my Traditional elders. The challenge of the white page and a request for an brief introduction invites a boring relay of facts and chronological events, or a concise spellbinding tale of suspense and intrigue. I prefer the latter.

Perhaps a detective novel? I conjure up the muses of Kathy Reich, Janet Evanovich, and Tony Hillerman. If you have not as of yet discovered these mystery writers, rush to the bookstore and fill your satchel. I’ve come to believe that the paperback detective is as good a metaphor for what I do as analyst, as is the wounded-healer, the alchemist, or the shaman. Working with the seeker/sufferer we gather soul evidence, ferret our way through the mystery and intrigue of the unconscious, all the while following dreams like hunches or clues until what was dead in the psyche is identified. And, like my beloved serial detectives, we discover, thankfully, that the mystery is never fully resolved. At the conclusion of one, a new plot inevitably presents itself.

Shall I tell my detective story with the voice of Reich’s Temperance Brennan and go for the bones of my lifestory? Or perhaps, enlist Evanovich’s Stephanie Plum and stumble like a bounty hunter into my FTA (Failure to Appear) destiny? Or maybe, let Hillerman’s Jimmy Chee utter some of the ancestral vision that oftentimes guides me when I am lost in the desert of the unknown? I have the curiosity and tenacity of Temperance, the whimsy and dumb luck of Stephanie, and the sense of a sacred calling of policeman/shaman Jimmy. But, alas, the muses of others will not light on my shoulders. I am left with my own voice.

Muriel McMahon was born a cradle Catholic into a small community along the Rez shores of the Grand River in Brantford, Ontario, Canada. The year was 1959, the month was May. No stars in the sky, no shepherds, no wise ones. Two parents, two sisters, one brother, and all the triggers for a most boring array of familial complexes.

I’m peeking at the last page to see if reading on is worth the effort. Answer? No. Perhaps a fairytale?



Once there was a barren Queen whose King committed a grievous act of self harm. The castle they built together collapsed. With the tragic death of her King, the Queen lost meaning. She quit teaching, adopted a dog, cut her hair, started a Jungian analysis, bought new shoes, and struggled to start over. Grimm’s ground zero! Grieve not, although she did for many years, for out of the rubble, life gradually reemerged. A Princess of potential new meaning was born. This Princess embarked upon a strange and arduous journey to foreign lands of Switzerland. She began a 5 year quest to bring back the fools gold of Jungian analytical training. Would she find her Prince of meaning? Alas, on the journey she met dwarfs and trolls and witches and wizards; most of them in herself. She persevered, even as institutes crumbled and swelled around her. Then, from out of the chaos that is creation, in February of 2007, she graduated from the International School of Analytical Psychology, Zurich. Today and forever after, the princess practices as a Jungian analyst in Guelph, Ontario, Canada. She no longer lives in a castle (mortgaged to pay for the training!), and rather than the golden Prince she sought in Switzerland, she may have brought back a troll. Time will tell. Regardless, she lives happily ever after, until she doesn’t.

Wouldn’t Marie Louise von Franz have a field day interpreting this sorry little tale? Perhaps a Traditional story is a more suitable medium for autobiography?

“This story may be true, this story may be false. This story tells a lie to tell a truth. It was the time of the Strawberry Moon...”

In communing with himself, [one] finds not deadly boredom and melancholy but an inner partner; more than that, a relationship that seems like the happiness of a secret love, or like a hidden springtime, when the green seed sprouts from the barren earth, holding out the promise of future harvest.

C.G. Jung, *CW14*, para. 623

TAKING STOCK: FIFTY YEARS AFTER JUNG

June 12th, 2011, 2 – 4:30 pm at 223 St. Clair Ave West

FREE TO MEMBERS

LIMIT OF 30, REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Members are invited to join available analysts for a free event on Sunday, June 12, at 2 p.m. marking the half-century since Jung's passing.

We'll be raising a glass to the Old Man, and watching a film by Colorado analyst Stephen Witty called, "Where We Are; Jungian Analysts in the 21st Century." It is a well-received documentary of what it is to be an analyst today, and we trust it will provide us with a springboard for a kind of stock-taking discussion on "where we are" as a movement that has grown out of C.G. Jung's life work.

This event follows the quarterly meeting of the Ontario Association of Jungian Analysts, and caps a busy year of sponsored activities in this region.

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JUNG AND ROYALTY

The marriage of HRH Prince William of Wales has drawn all kinds of the wrong attention. Souvenirs, bridal dresses, party menus and the like are not very interesting. Neither are the unintelligent views expressed about the irrelevance of monarchy in the 21st century. For us, as adherents to the teachings of C.G. Jung, the "right attention" might be to ask, what might this event teach us psychologically?

C.G. Jung, in his radio broadcasts, spoke to the effect that "the Unconscious likes aristocracy" and a calmer pace to historical existence. Finding the exact citation has defeated us, but the notion is consistent with his thought and with the specific criticism often made about him that he was "too impressed" by gentry, nobility and royalty; but few looked deeper to understand what he was on about.

There is an important nugget in the published analytical diaries of Catharine Rush Cabot, in which she records comments from her friend and fellow analyst, princess-daughter of the last ruling king of Saxony. The gist is that the longer one's "living mental history," the more psychologically robust one would be. The more one knew about one's forebears and the challenges they had surmounted, the greater would be one's confidence in facing present and future tests. Cabot wrote in 1935 (page 116), "Jung said that we ought to have kings and queens, that England was wise to keep hers. These people had such tradition and were conscious of their past. No situations were new or too difficult for them."

As we mulled over these thoughts, we came to watch random British television programmes on cable leading up to the royal wedding. Several times in that single stretch, separate individuals spoke of the value to them personally of "history coming alive." Doesn't that come close to the psychological point that Jung makes? When your living memory is a thousand years long, can you not see the breadth of understanding it brings to life itself? It gives us grounding that is deep and solid as well as broad

Whatever the future of the young royal couple, we wish them well in the difficult job of serving as exemplifications of the psychological principle that, come what may, "no situation is too new or too difficult" to be faced honestly and well. Our psyche is ancient, and it contains wonderful resources to help us. That there are people "out there" trained, supported and willing to be hooks for those helpful projections is a mighty and a powerful thing.

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THE BLACK MIRROR

Have you ever heard of a "black mirror"? For centuries, they were used to assist the conscious mind to perceive and appropriate Unconscious contents.

Not long ago the remains of a British elder were excavated near Wetwang, East Yorkshire. This a "wise woman" died about 300 B.C., and was buried in a chariot with many grave goods. One of the high-status items buried with her was an iron mirror, apparently kept in a cloth bag decorated with tiny blue beads.

Investigation into parallels showed that such mirrors were not that useful for use as a personal "looking-glass," but over many centuries had been used in a practice called "scrying." (This word comes from the Medieval English root word *descry* meaning "to perceive.") The most famous example of this same possession is the example of Michel Nostradamus in the 16th century.

A different age called this practice "divinization." The use of black mirrors for that purpose is simply one technique to allow archetypal images to arise into awareness from the depths of the Unconscious. This is not a very romantic a way to describe it, perhaps, but it is a more useful one for we psychologists. We pay attention to those depths in many ways, notably through dreams, artistic and other imaginal activities. Using candles, pierced stones, black mirrors and the like in extraverted ways have no objective value; they're simply one means to the same end.

But perhaps we might linger, for a moment, on the topic of black mirrors and see what might come up. We were struck recently by how *totally* the ancient use of a "black mirror" contrasts with the "black mirror" that currently inhabits virtually every household of the land. Look around your house, and we dare to predict that you'd find quite a few black mirrors, notably the black screen of an inert television or that an unused computer. Contrast how these are used (i.e., not) compared to the ancient way.

Even the most ordinary person with the most ordinary life routinely comes home from their work computer

and turns on their home system. For them, isolated perhaps in a residential tower, it risks no longer being a tool, an invaluable servant, but instead becomes a sinkhole for psychic energy. No wonder that it often happens, when one's "black mirror" lights up and becomes the "glass screen," that we are separated further from our imagination and estranged from our depths.

The computer and the television can be helpful, informative and creative forces in human existence – but what is their long term effect on our inner life? We have barely begun to consider this topic. Many of us who work with analysts, however, will touch sooner than later on the problem of bonding with virtual realities, in which available psychic energy is siphoned off away from life (which is hard) into fantasy (which is pleasurable). People caught in this bind neither *do* (we are not active in the objective world) nor do they *be* (we are not in communion with the subjective world) but exist in a kind of mental stasis, often cut off from life behind the glass screen. (In dreams this often exemplifies as the dream ego looking out, watching the world from behind a window.) Many of those thus affected simply cannot free themselves. This psychological issue, for so we deem it, is growing in importance. Now that the "black mirror" exists only as a "glass screen" it is expanding its reach through tiny mobile telephones, and in portable computer tablets that slip into a small bag. They are relatively cheap, and can be very useful, or this wouldn't happen. They have come to rule our civilization, or at least so it would seem, in an astonishingly short span of time. These encouragements to extraverted perception – and to the increase of stimulus, and perceived demand, and anxiety – do damage to introverted ways of perceiving and creating. Rarely in our busy, active, distracted culture are lengthy periods of so-called inactivity deemed to be of any value whatsoever. The vacation – the Latin root word *vacatio* meant "freedom" or "exemption" – is no longer a break from anything. Whatever one left behind, or faces upon return, has the power to follow almost anywhere. It takes greater ego strength than most of us have to leave one's devices off, or better still, abandon them back home in a drawer.

Jung is sometimes poked fun at for his dislike of phonograph records, radio broadcasts and, towards the end of his life, the spread of television and air travel. He's been dead for fifty years, but we feel strongly that his point is still valid: we are the creatures of a long evolution, and that ancient soul hasn't had a chance to catch up with one trying development before another, even more insistent, one succeeds it.

And yet consciousness can steer us past this obstacle. Yes, we would have to be different from our contemporaries. Yes, we would be cut off (at least in the constant sense) from a level of contact and discourse that others seem to relish. But what about heeding our feelings of dis-ease, or anxiety, or fatigue, or malaise? What about using the glass screen more consciously, and less compulsively. What if it were possible to draw some inspiration from forebears such as "Wetwang Woman" and Nostradamus, and take the time simply to open the mind and heart and soul, to contemplate the black mirror in its silence, and see just what might arise?

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Solitude is for me a fount of healing which makes my life worth living. Talking is often a torment for me, and I need many days of silence to recover from the futility of words.

C.G. Jung, *Letters, II*, 30 May 1957.

SUBMISSIONS TO CHIRON

The C.G. Jung Foundation's members and friends are very welcome to submit pieces for publication in *Chiron*. We would particularly welcome short articles (under 1000 words) on archetypal material, and very short (under 500 words) "book notes" and film reviews. Longer pieces can be negotiated, especially if serialization is possible.

We very sincerely promise that our responsibility to cast an eagle editorial eye over these submissions will be lightly and not impertinently applied, and that you will see beforehand any results of our meddling; so that the full essence of your insights and the character of your "voice" is kept safe and sound in the published version.

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