

Jung and the Myth of Orpheus. APC Sept 20th 2011

Orpheus was the first musician, the first poet and the first story-teller, that is the first composer of myth, for *mythos* is story; and all nature crowded round to hear. His mode of telling was poetry, that heightened use of language which uses its full resources, the word rhythms, the sounds and textures, the interweaving associations of the imagery—to which the lyre brought the added range of music, played like they played the piano in early cinema. It was with this great battery of power that Orpheus could draw all Nature to him. The trees and animals clustered round, the very rocks moved into circles. The image of Orpheus sitting at the centre of a wall or a tessellated pavement with the whole natural world ranged round him, began to appear in the later Roman Empire, from North Africa up to Gloucestershire. It was a *mandala*, a symbol of the Self, and it spoke of a different power to that which made the Empire.

It was as if within the boundaries of the *Pax Romana* a broader form of human life might develop, a wider consciousness which would include two sorts of power. But then the *Pax Romana* collapsed, the Eastern barbarians poured across the boundaries and the villas, the bath-houses and the tessellated pavements were overgrown with brambles and sank into the earth. And no one, for some fifteen hundred years, thought of that other power except the alchemists and gradually the poets and painters, when such people began to emerge again, and much later Jung. He knew it well, as had Goethe a little earlier, and he was determined to take it beyond the bounds of art, to propose it as an hypothesis in science. It would be synchronicity, things connected not be cause but meaning, their place in a structure or pattern of meaning—the same sort of energy which makes every authentic myth. It was in effect the hypothesis of two sorts of power, two sorts of causality: that of visible causes and the effects of causes, and that of the psychic patterns that move in a society. In the Red Book he speaks of things that he only learnt in a descent similar to Orpheus's, into the unconscious: two sorts of meaning, the meaning of logic and the inorganic world, and a meaning of the psyche which seems to it to be nonsense; and that both together makes the supreme meaning, not one or the other but both. It would be the *coniunctio*, the marriage of the opposite and equal which would contain all other opposites within it, including the time and space-bound nature of matter and the timelessness of the psyche, a union

intrinsically spanning the boundaries of birth and death. Orpheus was a practitioner in this dimension of being: shaman, poet, story-teller, healer. Jung, though he vigorously denied the name of artist, was one too. And both were ultimately concerned with the nature of love.

It was for this reason, I would think, that when Orpheus tried to marry, the auguries were strangely unfavourable. This would not be any straightforward ceremony. Ovid has Hymen, the god of marriage, winging his way across the world to be present; but his torch will not light, it smokes and brings tears to the eyes. And the bride, Eurydice, wandering in the fields with her bridesmaids, puts her foot upon a serpent and goes straight down into the Underworld.

At once, Orpheus takes up his lyre and follows her. In ancient shamanic cultures the shaman did it for the people. They helped him. They drummed, shook anklet-bells, clapped hands, thumped feet; and it could go on all night as he went into trance and down. He did it to find out where the game had gone, the fish, the seals, the elk—or to find some soul that had been lost down there, before its due time. Orpheus goes down to find his own soul. He takes his music, his story, his song—and it has power down there. For Charon rows him across the dark gulf which all at their deaths must pass; Cerberus, the three-headed hound who guards the door fawns on him and lets him pass; and as he walks between the ranks of those imprisoned there, still singing, he suspends their suffering, stops the meaningless, repetitive patterns in which they are imprisoned: rolling a boulder up a hill only to have it roll down again, fetching water in vessels that are cracked and won't hold it, spinning through the air on disks of fiery, sexual passion and never coming to earth; up to their necks in water but unable to drink; overhung by luscious fruit and unable to eat: all typical of the human state, and not as any after-world punishment but *now*, in this world—just the situations people get themselves into. And in his music it is all stilled. In some way the song gives them what, in these stuck rituals, in some unconscious way, they seek.

It is meaning. And it is feeling. And are they not the same? Do not the things we feel have meaning for us? Is hell in no underworld but here, now? Is hell where we cannot weep and cannot rejoice? Is feeling actually the presence of psyche in the human body as the place where it becomes conscious? Do synchronicities always take place in conditions of high feeling? Are they not when we feel most alive and most in a meaningful

world? All these are questions which occur to us at this point in the myth, and I don't propose to answer them. Questions are better than answers. All Ovid says is that the tortures stop and even the cheeks of the Furies are wet with tears. And when Orpheus reaches the throne of Hades and his abducted bride, Yes, they say, he can take Eurydice—for love, they see now at once, is stronger than death—but on one condition: that he won't look back on her until he has her in the upper world. This is the second great problem of the myth. Orpheus walks up the steep and narrow path still playing his music, and Eurydice follows as if borne along in its web; but as he reaches the surface he looks back. He is in the light and she is still in the shadows and at once she fades. When, desperately now, he clasps her to him he holds only air; and after that the way back is closed.

Orpheus sits down now beside the river in a state known to psychology as *anima possession*, which paralyses a man as if he had himself been stung by the serpent. The women of Thrace flock to comfort him, but he will have none of them.

His eyes, we must think, are still focussed in the underworld. Perhaps he cannot give his heart out and about. Perhaps it is only because his heart is down there, in the rhizome and the root, that he can sing to Nature of itself. To quote A.D.Melville (in an extremely fine translation in Oxford World Classics:

For seven days he sat upon the bank,
Unkempt and fasting, anguish, grief and tears
His nourishment, and cursed Hell's cruelty.
Then he withdrew to soaring Rhodope,
And Haemus battered by the Northern gale.

These are the high mountains; and there he takes up his lyre again and sings his sad song, and all nature sits down again to hear him, for it is their own stories that he sings. He who has cursed the cruelty of his fate surrenders now to what Nature really intends, which is its long trek through all the aeons of its evolution towards consciousness, and this creature, Orpheus, who is her only hope of getting there. And throughout that singing, the phenomenon of unrequited love runs like a connecting thread, as if the mystery of consciousness were somehow in that very void. Ovid himself, one feels sure, was not over-successful in love, but he wrote about it the whole time and would become the great channel or conduit by which Greek

thinking would flow into the barbarian Northern cultures, utterly changing them. And when Orpheus sweeps his hands across the chords and begins to sing it is also Ovid doing it; and when Nature crowds around to hear it is all the crowding centuries through which this great poem will pass, up to our own time when it becomes an indispensable, I would say, source for the study of psyche.

Every tree was there: Dordona's holy durmast

(the great oak of Dodona, was the first Oracle in Greece, older than Delphi)

...poplars once

The sun's sad daughters, oaks with lofty leaves,
Soft limes, the virgin laurel and the beech
The ash, choice wood for spear shafts, brittle hazels,
The knotless fir, the ilex curving down
With weight of acorns, many-coloured maples,
The plane, the river-loving willow.
The water-lotus, the box for ever green,
Thin tamarisks and myrtles, doubled-hued,
Viburnums bearing berries of rich blue.
Twist-footed ivy came, and tendrilled vines,
And vine-clad elms, pitch-pines and mountain ash,
Lithe, lofty palms, the prize of victory,
And pines high-girdled in a lofty crest,
The favourite of Cybele, the gods'
Great mother, since in this tree Attis doffed
His human shape and stiffened in its trunk.

It is a hymn to the multiplicity of Nature, each tree with its individual grace and beauty and story: with always the close kinship with human destiny so that there is a perpetual interchange between the two. And then come the stories

Amid the throng the cone-shaped cypress stood,
A tree now, but in days gone by a boy.

And so on.

But one day as he sits with his audience a band of Thracian women, on one of those woman-only festivals customary at certain seasons of the year, when they go together to the mountains, put on animal skins, weave serpents through their hair and perform secret mysteries, caught sight of him.

... suddenly as he swept his strings
 In concord with his song a frenzied band
 Of Thracian women wearing skins of beasts
 From some high ridge of ground caught sight of him.
 'Look!', shouted one of them tossing her hair
 Which floated on the breeze, 'Look, there he is, the man who scorns us!'

And they rush down and attack. For a time the music stops their missiles in mid-air, and they drop harmlessly to the ground. But as the tumult grows it drowns out the lyre, and then the missiles strike home. And once Orpheus is down, they pick up the mattocks left in a neighbouring field by peasants who have prudently fled, and hack his body into pieces.

All Nature grieves.

The sorrowing birds, the creatures of the wild,
 The woods that followed as he sang,
 The flinty rocks and stones, all wept and mourned
 For Orpheus....
 ...All around his limbs
 Lay scattered. Hebrus's stream received his head
 And lyre, and floating by (so wonderful!)
 His lyre sent sounds of sorrow and his tongue
 Lifeless, still murmured sorrow, and the banks
 Gave sorrowing reply.

For Orpheus, the re-memberment is only in the timeless. Love is lost but found again there.

Searching through the Elysian Fields he found Eurydice
 And took her in his arms with leaping heart.
 There hand in hand they stroll, the two together,
 Sometimes he follows as she walks in front,

Sometimes he goes ahead and gazes back—
No danger now—at his Eurydice.

Their taking turns to go ahead and follow is a final contradiction of the power-world of the Empire, in which a woman would certainly walk behind. The myth of Orpheus is the myth of consciousness, but it is the consciousness of the world itself—in all its opposites equally, of which our relations with the opposite sex is our closest and most conscious experience.

If we take the main problems of this myth I think the meaning emerges from them, not just a pretty story, not just a tragic story, but a myth of consciousness perfectly fashioned in the way of myth, in the perpetually fertile womb of the unconscious psyche.

The problems: Why were the auguries as they were? Why did Eurydice have to go down to quite so immediately? Why, having successfully followed her down could he not bring her up again? And finally, why did he have nothing to do with the Women of Thrace and why was it they who in the end dismembered by them?

And if we start with the first we must ask at once, Where is there any great love story in the world not structured in this way? All such tales are of love unrequited, and perhaps this must be so because, as Jung stressed repeatedly it is only in conditions of the most extreme limit that we can be conscious of the limitless—and the limitless is love. In fairy tales the happy ending is normal, but they are not about everyday life. They are about the archetypes which stand behind it and they are changeless, infinite. But here, on this 'bank and shoal of time' where Hamlet is pulled apart by the opposites, we have Romeo and Juliet, Troilus and Cressida, Tristan and Isolde, Heloise and Abelard, the lady at the top of her Provençal tower and the troubadour at the bottom and a million other such tales; and they are always about love blocked and felt with all the intensity of that blockage.. As soon as we hear that Eurydice has descended to the underworld on her marriage-day, we know where we are in a mythic world whose purpose is not to entertain or sadden but the making of consciousness.

If you go to Verona you will see signs pointing to Juliet's house, la casa di Giulietta; and you think: 'simple people, tourist trap, obviously a lie'; but if you go there, you stop all that. It's not because it really could be Juliet's

house: that is irrelevant. But every inch of the walls is covered with graffiti, Marco ama Cristina, with a heart and an arrow through it; Roberto ama Giulia, Giovanni and Maria are two chambers of the same heart and so on and on and on. You realise that this is a sacred place, a place of pilgrimage. An enormous archetype is in this little courtyard, as you feel it also in other shrines, and it pulls us into it: it is the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*: the archetype, the unifying principle, as the alchemists knew, of being itself on all its levels, in all its dimensions—expressed in the most powerful experience which generally we have of it, the energy generated between the sexes, a creativity present somewhere within it which is itself the numinous.

Put two opposites together, said the alchemists,: ‘take a Coetenian dog and an Armenian bitch’, or a cock and a hen or a winged and wingless dragon or some other such metaphor. Put them together, and *something* as mysterious as the original creation will come out it. Alchemy, also, is not about real life. Like the fairy tales it works in the archetypes that stand behind it. When a man and a woman meet, in whatever circumstances, there is always a murmur, in that sounding-box of psyche which is the human body, of the mystery that anything exists at all.

Nature makes the point simply—by making us. Put the right brain next to the left brain, it says, join them with the *corpus collosum*, enclose them in a double bed, the round O of this skull prepared over millions of years to hold them—and something will appear: it will be consciousness. But if, in spite of her best efforts, they are not truly together because one dominates the other, then nothing will happen.

In the right brain is registered the consciousness of the body, with all its unbelievably subtle intimations, and the memories of its evolution back to the reptiles and beyond—imprint of its emotionality strengthening as it comes into the mammals and on towards ourselves. In the left brain is the transcendent intellect, which doesn’t feel anything. . Put them together, says Nature, and you will have consciousness.

It would be what she has long laboured for, why she evolved this extraordinary creature who is Orpheus. The left brain alone can never see it: it is blinded by its logic, where opposites exclude each other. In Nature they need each other, but no left brain can understand that. But it has the right

brain, where the union of opposites is its essence. It has to listen but not give way, for the opposites must remain opposites or nothing is achieved.

Jung speaks of love as something objective in the world, to which we relate or don't relate, of which we are the victims as well as the agents, whether we know it or not: 'the agents and victims of cosmogonic love'. Cosmogonic means world-creating—the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* which we generally call 'God'.

We know the cosmogonic love in the experience of creation: it is then that it comes into consciousness. It does what it does anyway, but it needs the sentient, self-reflective body to be conscious. In marriage, not knowing what we do, we bend ourselves to its service. That is why marriage is unconditional—beyond what we think to be better and worse, spanning also the boundary of life and death. (There is no doubt that the archetype includes that too). And as soon as we learn that Eurydice has gone straight across that boundary, we know that this story will not be the simple search for joy that in our poverty we call love, but a love story in that full sense.

The Lyre

It was music that took him across that boundary, music that opened the doors, music that nearly brought her up. In the way of myths, we are straight into the branching associations of the lyre and of Hermes who made it. It was the first musical instrument after the solitary pan-pipes: it was essentially a social invention, used for myth and story. In the Homeric Hymns we read how it was made. Hermes, just born from his mother Mair and sleeping innocently, it seems, in her cave, has already been up and stolen the cattle of his half-brother Apollo; and now, when Apollo comes into the cave looking for them, is back in the cot, protesting that it couldn't possibly be him since he is only a tiny, new-born baby. But he has already slaughtered a couple of them and has a new project in his mind—and that is the lyre. As soon as Apollo has gone he is out on the road, finds a tortoise, scoops out the body from the shell, saying cheerfully, 'Better to stay at home, 'tis dangerous to go aboard'! Then wraps around it a piece of hide from a stolen bullocks, strings gut across it from a sheep he must have slaughtered too, sweeps his hand over the strings and lo—the sweetest possible music comes out from it. It is a harmony beyond all deaths; it is the harmony of the whole.

As with all the gods, there is no consciousness in what Hermes does. Consciousness comes with the human. If you identify with any archetype—Mars or Venus-Aphrodite, Zeus-Jupiter himself like our dictators, or quite commonly Hermes, you will lose the heart. It is extremely easy to do, for the archetype pulls us into it: it is a force-field. The only way to get a sense of the whole is to resist the individual pull of any of them. The heart is a consciousness of the whole. Hermes is the cunning of Nature, the miraculous nose of the fox for a quick way into the farmyard and out again. He is the god of merchants who create wealth and equally of thieves who take it away: it is in this way that he binds the world together. He is the god of travellers, standing beside the road where it forks; and it doesn't matter to him which road you take but you had better take one, or he will lose interest in you—and you need him if you travel any road. We meet him in the *Odyssey*, showing Odysseus how to get out of the Cyclops's cave, how to cope with Circe and not be turned into a pig, how to escape from her island and not sit for ever on her beach, looking out towards home, longing for home but held by her enchantment, that pull of the partial archetype. Home, of course, stands for the human heart, the whole. Finally in the *Odyssey* we meet him leading the souls of the suitors across the boundary, like a flock of twittering birds. (The image is typical of Homer and typical of poetry: it is that, surely, of swallows leaving on their annual migration. And we know next year they, or maybe other swallows, will be back. The image connects the two sides of that boundary.)

Hermes is essential to the processes of evolution, and to the unfolding of any individual life. When Hopkins says

Each mortal thing does one thing and same
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves, goes itself, myself it speaks and spells,
Crying what I do is me: for that I came

It will need Hermes with his nose and his opportunism to follow that path, to do that crying out. Adolescents particularly need him. Or do they need her? For he crosses that boundary too.

But consciousness is when the whole is put together and he can't do that. He can make the lyre, but it is only Orpheus who can use it. And the body of Orpheus himself is the lyre: it is with the body that he responds to the world

like the wind harp in Coleridge's poem the Aeolian Harp (a direct allusion to the myth.) A lute has been left in the window casement of Coleridge's cottage in Clevedon, and begins to hum and twang in the breeze that blows across it from the sea—and Coleridge has a thought:

And what if all of animated nature
 Be but organic Harps diversely fram'd
 That tremble into thought as o'er them sweeps
 Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
 At once the Soul of each and god of all.

Coleridge was, you see, another unsuccessful lover continuously in the arms of that great archetype of love-unrequited, continually like the little fox in the I Ching who walks rashly on the ice, getting his head in the water: another whose work lies in the roots of our psychology—and how could he know anything about the water without getting his head in it?

It is the great mystery of evolution that that more comes out of the less, that the heart can emerge from animal cunning, suggesting irresistibly what Jung believed, that Nature (or was it God, was it Love?) wanted some creature who could be conscious; that nothing less drove it on to the making of matter and thence to the creation of more and more complex organic forms until it reached the two brains in one round—after which no more was needed. The lyre is a symbol of arriving there: the tortoise or turtle shell, itself a symbol in many cultures of the whole, the ox-hide wrapped around it, the strings of gut held taught across the opposite sides—many sentient plants and animals, and music coming out of it, but only for Orpheus and those who hear him.

THE DISMEMBERMENT

It is the same women of Thrace whom he rejects that in the end pull him to pieces. It puzzles us at first, for it is so like its parallel in myth, the death of King Pentheus in the Bacchae—and yet so different; for Pentheus is the enemy of Nature, the king who denies all honour due to Dionysus. The rage that falls on him would seem to be Nature's rage—and well deserved.

But Orpheus is in a peace as deep as that which the prophet Isaiah also promises, where the lion lies down with the lamb, the infant puts his hand

over the serpent's hole and is not stung—and all the opposites in Being are held in the same web of meaning which Orpheus *sings*.

But Nature knows nothing of reward and punishment: they are political concepts, the concepts of Pentheus himself. Nature's concern is with consciousness, and whether it works on it in a great sinner like Pentheus or a good man like Orpheus, is all one to it. Just the same issue rises with Job, in the Hebrew myth. It isn't fair, and that is not the point. Myths are fragments of the web of meaning, and dismemberment runs through them like a thread. Job was another to be dismembered: his wealth lost, his children, cattle, servants gone the same way; and Job himself left on a dung-heap scratching his sores. Dismemberment is when the structures of the ego are totally destroyed, and only the immortal Self is left. Job had that. He has an integrity unmatched by Yahwe himself, who is no more than tribal projection, boasting of his power.

Dismemberment is when only the Self is left, and the ego must be reconstructed. It figures in the rituals that make the shaman, and there is probably no-one in this room who has not known something of it. Everywhere, the objective psyche is engaged in its work of making consciousness. Dismemberment is an essential part of the process.

Euripides understood this. In the *Bacchae* Dionysus leads King Pentheus to his dismemberment like a priest to the sacrifice. He has undergone the same thing himself, in his earlier form as Zagreus. It was the Titans who pulled him apart, and the nature of the Titans may be helpful for us for they are metaphors, I think, for the mindless forces which shaped the globe long before the dawning of the live creatures, let alone the human heart. They are still present in the psyche, like the volcanic forces in the base-chakra of the kundalini; and we have to know them or the higher consciousness is ungrounded..

When the titans strike, it may look like a break-down, a severe illness, a psychotic interlude, an exceptionally destructive love affair, the loss of what for all our lives we have worked for: anything which undoes the ego and returns us to its base.. Ultimately it will be death, the total loss of ego; and then we may think, will be the great epiphany of the Self.

ENVOI

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* survived the dismemberment of the Roman Empire, and it survived because of the Church. Having easily repressed the oral mythologies of the Northern world, it all unknowing took the pagan imagery and thought of the Greek world into that empty space. Latin was in daily use between churchmen, but they were aware of the bastard forms into which it had descended. The polished beauty of Ovid's verse was sufficient reason for preserving it.

It was very guilty, a pagan beauty as forbidden as the naked statue of a goddess; but since it was 'only poetry' they could think that it didn't really count. So when the dialects of Europe emerged as languages in their own right, the Roman poets and especially Ovid were still there to show them what language could be. Petrarch knew his Ovid, and so did Boccaccio, Dante, Chaucer, Spenser, Marvell, Shakespeare, Milton. And if you go into any gallery of Renaissance and post-Renaissance painting you will see at once how necessary he was for painting—perhaps especially for Titian, that great intellect as well as painter. And when the Romantic movement in English poetry opened it was no different. Even the conflict between the revealed truths of religion and the siren voices of Nature came through into the nineteenth century.

In the poem by Coleridge, the Aeolian Harp which I mentioned earlier, after the thought which comes up straight from the unconscious, 'and what if all of animated nature be but organic harps diversely framed' there is an immediate back-lash,

But thy more serious eye a mild reproof
Darts, O beloved Woman! Nor such thoughts,
Dim and unhallow'd, dost thou not reject,
And biddest me walk humbly with my God.
Meek Daughter in the family of Christ!
Well hast thou said and holily disprais'd
These shapings of the unregenerate mind,
Bubbles that glitter as they rise and break
On vain Philosophy's aye-babbling spring.

Jung speaks of the way the negative in all of us comes through after any authentically creative moment, and just chops it down. But here was the Anima Mundi, at once the soul of each and god of all.

Jung knew it—as when he took his camp stool just before dawn on the African veldt, to watch the coming of the light:

At first the contrasts between light and darkness would be extremely sharp. Then objects would assume contour and emerge into the light which seemed to fill the valley with a compact brightness. The horizon above became radiantly white. Gradually the swelling light began to enter into the very structure of objects, which became illuminated from within until at last they shone translucently, like bits of coloured glass. Everything turned to flaming crystal. The cry of the bell-bird rang round the horizon. At such moments I felt as if I were inside a temple. It was the most sacred hour of the day. I drank in this glory with an insatiable delight, or rather in a timeless ecstasy.

It was Jung who said the unconscious is our deepest nourishment, the source of all our healing; and that the marriage with it, conscious and that other consciousness that is its opposite and destined lover, is the ultimate sacred marriage, the longed for *coniunctio* of the alchemists.

The Demons

Let's look at some addictions. Sex, like the sirens whom Odysseus meets and stuffs the ears of his crew with wax so they do not hear the singing and plunge overboard. Himself he ties to the mast so that he can hear the voices but powerless to go to them. This would be indeed a state of consciousness. Or the Lorelei in German myth, who lure sailors onto certain rocks in the Rhine. Or the lovely forms which St Antony goes out into the desert to escape, but finds out there—in a far more powerful form. What do you do to protect yourself from them? You can't. They are just like the *galla*, they eat no offerings, drink no libations, accept no gifts, enjoy no love-making, have no sweet children to kiss. They tear the wife from the husband's arms, the child from the father's knees, the bride from her marriage home.

What would be the corresponding demon for a woman? This is not so well served in myth. It would be the sort of strength that she has not got herself and so projects. If she had it it would make her whole, so she will project it onto a man even if it seems bizarre that she does so. Again it is the power of the archetype, that which would make whole so becomes the most important thing in the world, and thus over-valued, but with a power that cannot be fought against and may seem like a possession. It is like the 99th sheep that the shepherd leaves all the rest to go in search of. It is the power of the whole, but it can be experienced as demonic.

Then there is the addiction to power, so strong that the ego may be completely lost in it and a whole society be caught up in the powerlessness of one man in the face of it, who cannot give it up, even when it has shown its true nature and is destroying him. At this point, I think, it turns then into

an addiction for the Nothing. It is as if he has got into a vortex going down, and that countless others are going with him, and that the only thing a conscious person can do is to keep out of it.

Then there is money, hard to distinguish from power, because equally unassuagable, swelling with the same power until it becomes stronger than the ego and the only thing the multi-millionaire can do, is to try to become a billionaire.

Alcohol, and the mind-altering substances seem small beer after these, for they are personal, and it is only a family that suffers. But a family is a world. Like power and money and sex they start seductively and only later reveal the same heartless pull downwards into the chaos. All are part-archetypes which in a split-off state can become more powerful than the ego. There is no way of conquering them and only one way to tame them—that is a process of integration. In association with other part-archetypes they are at once limit. And that is the music. There is no other way.

Meaning comes with the human heart. When we say something means a lot to us we say it *matters*—and it matters not for ourselves but for its own sake. We love it. It has meaning in the sensed of value, not the designated meaning (this word ‘means’ that) to which the word is confined in our own culture. The western languages are singularly poor in their words, either for love or meaning. We use then both the whole time. We are in an immense confusion.

Love as Jung uses the world is cosmogonic, it creates the world and as the heart develops it creates the world as meaning. That is the heart—a late development in evolution and late in the individual, for it has nothing to do with the neediness that in our poverty we call love. And it cannot be that love without descending into the chaos of before all heart, before all meaning, back to the beginning of time when there was only the mysterious force which made the stellar dust to drift together and form stars and later galaxies, and somehow buried deep within that mindless impulse the possibility one day of consciousness.

Little, black, intensely energised demons are found in all mythologies. Their best description is in perhaps the earliest written myths that we have, The Descent of Inanna into the Underworld to meet her sister Ereshkigal.

They are called the 'galla, and when Inanna, after a period spent as a lump of putrefying meat hanging on a hook, comes up again, the galla cling to her sides and come up with. Their sole function is to find someone else to take her place.

for that they have a strength as irresistible as that which we know in the addictions, that which compels a man, perhaps after long abstinence, to return to the vodka or sex or heroin or whatever else it is that has that power for him. It is always the same power and it is at the heart of the mystery of consciousness. Inanna felt it on her way down, losing at every stage of that journey some part of her human defences, with the gate-keeper repeating at each stage the same mantra, 'the ways of the underworld are perfect, Inanna, they cannot be questioned'—until she arrives at the bottom naked. Those attacked by the same force sometimes experience it as the thundering of hooves, like that which precedes the abduction of Persephone, or a crowding round of female figures like those that tempt St Anthony in the Desert; but there is always something ineluctable about it. For there is no wholeness without the cold, driven world of Hades—and consciousness must know the whole. (786778)

If we ask what is the nature of that power only one answer is possible: it is simply the burden of consciousness which is laid on the human race by its own nature,

, from within itself. the its power. It can only be the expectation of all the ages that rests on the human race, that it be conscious, that kindle a light in the darkness of mere being, a compulsive push which is content with nothing less than the whole. On each man and woman bears down this ever-restless longing—particularly apparent when most irrational, when all in its life seems to be well.

It is too much, and the more the culture damages its children the more it is too much. But how else could it be for those who carry the longing of all the ages, to.

Christ in the Christian myth is pulled apart by all the opposites and yet holds. He is at the centre of his cross, like Dionysus assaulted by Titans, and like Dionysus he holds. It is only by death and resurrection that the human

can hold, for the opposition between time and the timeless is the foundation stone of all being; and consciousness must know it. It cannot be other than a perpetual dismemberment and coming together. It is the rhythm of the world, born effortlessly by the animals but often too much for humans. In all the varieties of crime and mental illness the same force is present.

We can see the myth of Orpheus, then, as the encompassment of every meeting between the opposites which make our world. Orpheus loses Eurydice and then loses her again because having and not-having are constituent parts of every union. To hold them apart in their togetherness is the essence of consciousness, and when we live too much in the upper world we become vulnerable to the demons, who will come in and pull us down.

In the shamanic tradition, the shaman is he or she who is dragged out and beyond the realm of human feeling into energies that long precede it, but is able to come back. The human can do it. Its nervous system has been constructed through all the aeons to do it. As objectively as the head contains both left and right hemispheres within it, the human organism walks in both worlds.

It is the heart which comes back, the heart which re-creates the world as surely as the laying of brick on brick.

Jung has done that for us, given us the key to that underworld. In another metaphor holds for us the thread of Ariadne, which Theseus used to find his way out of the underworld, but later betrayed because the outright war with the underworld was beginning and he wanted no more truck with it. Ariadne would have been his intermediary into it. But he sailed away leaving her on the beach at Naxos where Dionysus himself made her his bride.

Orpheus is the great figure in myth of consciousness, and it is Nature's own consciousness that speaks. In this way the human singer fulfils what for Jung is the sole purpose of his existence: which is to kindle a light in the darkness of unconscious Being. It is not a light we shine upon Nature from a place. Only in so far as we are Nature can we kindle it, for it is the *Lumen Naturae*, the light of Nature within us, and we must give it voice. It is a labour laid upon us by no other force but our own nature, the inexorable demands, as Jung put it, of our own Nature's

(I cannot think that the psyche, felt so continuously as a web of connectivity throughout the world, does not also connect me with Yasmin.)

Orpheus is a late member of a tradition that stretches back to the beginnings of human consciousness, that of the shaman. Humans have never much liked this burden. They have always sought someone else to do it for them. These were the shamans and later the priests. It doesn't seem to work any more. It probably never did, for we must all be our own shamans.

The shaman's job was to keep the passage clear between this world and the other one, conscious and unconscious. That was the importance of the shaman's journeys to and fro from the Underworld, between time and the timeless source of its being. The timeless is not passive towards us. Zeus comes endlessly to human maidens as the angel comes to Mary; and we in our turn feel the pull of the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, which pulls us into it. Blindly we seek its nourishment, as piglets looking for the teat, one of those many teats that lie spread out upon the earth. The shaman may go to the other world on tribal business, to find where the game have gone, the fish, the seals. Or it might be that he goes on more private business. Maybe a part of him has become dissociated, and his own sense of who he is has been lost, and he must go in search of it—as was the case with Orpheus.