FOOTNOTES

1 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM III* (The American Psychiatric Association, 1980), p. 317.

2 Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978), p. 235.

3 Ibid., p. 217.

4 As reported in *Newsweek*, Jan. 30, 1978, p. 70.

5 *The Metamorphoses of Ovid*, trans. by Mary M. Innes (Great Britain, Penguin Books, 1955). In addition to Ovid's account, there are various other classic versions of the Narcissus myth that come down to us from antiquity. These are all reviewed in Louise Vinge's excellent *The Narcissus Theme in Western European Literature* (Lund, 1967). Vinge points out that Ovid's version—in addition to being the most detailed account—is probably also the earliest, dating from around the time of the author's exile in 8 B.C.

6 Cf. "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena," in D. W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, (New York, Basic Books, 1971), pp. 1-25.

7 Martin Buber, *The Knowledge of Man*, trans. by M. Friedman and R. G. Smith, ed. by M. Friedman (New York, Harper & Row, 1965). Buber refers to this empathic process as "imagining the real" in the other and thereby making him present to himself.

8 I have taken this term from Robert Langs whose book *The Bipersonal Field* (New York, Jason Aronson, 1976) has been instrumental in my own thinking.

9 C. G. Jung, *The Practice of Psychotherapy*, CW 16, par. 454.

10 Erich Neumann uses this term in his description of the two-fold birth of the human child. According to Neumann, during the "post-uterine embryonic stage" the child's Self is (paradoxically) in two places, i.e., both "in" the child and "in" the mother. Gradually, the child's relatedness-Self, incarnated in the mother, must "migrate" into the child. When this happens, the child gains a "total Self" and the ego-Self axis makes its first appearance as an interior polarity within the child's psyche. Cf. Erich Neumann, *The Child*, trans. by Ralph Manheim (New York, Harper Colophon Books, 1973), p. 13ff.

11 Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, in *The Portable Oscar Wilde*, (New York, Viking Press, 1946), p. 267.

12 Ibid., p. 387.

13 Ibid., p. 391.

14 Andras Angyal, *Neurosis and Treatment*, ed. by Eugenia Hanfmann and Richard M. Jones (New York, Viking Press, 1965), pp. 78ff.

15 Harry J. S. Guntrip, *Psychoanalytic Theory, Therapy, and the Self* (New York, Basic Books Inc., 1971), Part II.

16 R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self*, (New York, Penguin Books, 1965), Chapter 5.

17 Ibid., p. 84.

18 Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* (New York, Penguin Books, 1955), pp. 125ff.

19 Ibid., p. 126.

20 Sir James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, ch. xviii, part 3: "The Soul as a Shadow and a Reflection," pp. 220-225.

21 Ibid., p. 223.

22 John Perry provides us with a description of the "reconstitutive processes that occur when finally the collective self in this condition collapses and the true self—now unprotected but available to reality—has a chance to be mirrored and come into being. Cf. John Perry, *Roots of Renewal in Myth and Madness*, (Jossey-Bass, 1976).

23 For an excellent discussion of the Orphics, see Erwin Rohde's scholarly book *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality Among the Greeks* (Books for Libraries Press, Freeport, N.Y., 1920).

24 E. A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris & The Egyptian Resurrection* (Dover, 1973), Vol. I, 94.

25 Cf. Budge, 82ff.

26 Ibid., 86.

27 Ibid., 112-13.

28 All quotations are from *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, N. K. Sandars (Penguin Books, 1960).

29 E. F. Edinger, "The Tragic Hero: An Image of Individuation," *Parabola*, 1976, Vol. I, 66-73 (67).

# Puer Aeternus: The Narcissistic Relation to the Self

JEFFREY SATINOVER

## *INTRODUCTION*

FOR SOME TWENTY YEARS the problem of the *puer aeternus* —the eternal adolescent—has been of growing interest and puzzlement to Jungian analysts. Interest in the *puer** has grown in proportion to a striking increase in the incidence of this kind of personality: a personality characterized on the one hand by a poor adjustment to quotidian demands, a failure to set stable goals and to make lasting achievements in accord with these goals, and a proclivity for intense but short-lived romantic attachments, yet, on the other hand, it is also characterized by noble idealism, a fertile imagination, spiritual insight and frequently, too, by remarkable talent.

*Puer* psychology is so widespread in part because it respects few boundaries: of gender, of archetypal disposition, of developmental paths. All different kinds of people can be *puers*, and the reason for this occupies a portion of this article. In brief, the reason is that *puer* psychology develops out of a very early disturbance in the appearance of the Self, and this early disturbance marks later differentiations of the personality with the *puer* stamp. As Jungians, we are inclined to categorize psychopathology according to a schema of archetypes. However, an important feature of *puer* psychology is the disturbed nature of the ego's relation to the archetypes in general and to the Self in particular. At the least, this approach allows a way of understanding the common underlying similarity amongst the diverse types of people who share *puer* traits; at best, it points to a therapeutic approach somewhat different than classical Jungian analyses. This latter point will appear throughout the paper, and will be focused on in the last section.

*For convenience I am applying the term "*puer*" to both the man and woman.

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## *I. IDENTITY, NARCISSISM AND INTROVERSION IN THE PUER*

The thesis of this section is straightforward: a missing sense of identity is the nuclear *puer* defect about which revolves the entire constellation of personality traits and behavioral consequences that characterizes *puer* personalities. What is this "sense of identity?" Colloquially, it is simply the feeling that you "know who you are," even if you can't articulate it. In time, the lack of this sense comes to be acknowledged as the single most important reason the *puer* has sought analysis, though it is rarely the presenting reason.

"Identity" is a difficult word to define, no less psychologically than philosophically. I would like to call attention to an important feature of both definitions, that is, the quality of "sameness," "oneness," or "repetition" which "identity" implies (indeed, these are its etymological roots). A central feature of the sense of identity is the subjective experience of being the same person from one moment to the next. *Puer* psychology is characterized by a widely fluctuating impression of who one is, and of one's worth.

The sense of identity occupies a peculiar place in the psyche. Strictly speaking, it is neither a content of consciousness (viz., a thought, a dream, a memory, an emotion) nor an unconscious structure (the shadow, the anima). One way to understand it is to conceive of this sense as the introspective apprehension of a coherent relationship prevailing amongst the various structures of the psyche. When the psyche is functioning in a stable and harmonious fashion; when there *is* a relationship amongst its parts, a functional unity exists and is perceived by the ego as the sense of identity. Another way of speaking of an ordered, dynamic relationship amongst all the parts of the psyche is to say that the Self is constellated. This notion provides the basis for a working Jungian definition of identity: it is the effect in consciousness of the constellation of the Self.

We tend to think of experiences of the Self as numinous and rare. On occasion this is so. A turning point in individuation, in childhood, during a crisis, at one of life's initiations, may be marked by a conscious experience of great numinosity when, so to speak, the Self itself appears to an awe-inspired ego. But the Self may also be present but unawares, exerting its effects on consciousness in a less direct fashion than in the great experiences, or it may be absent, and this absence, too, exerts its effects on consciousness. What introspectively observable differences are there between these last two states of the Self? When the Self is constellated, but the ego is not directly aware of it, introspection senses identity, senses being a particular person and no other; when the Self is not constellated, this sense is absent.



The analytic use of "narcissism" derives from Ovid's version of the classical myth. Narcissus, you recall, was a beautiful youth, a *puer aeternus*, who fell in love with his own reflection and so pined to death. Psychoanalysis originally used the term "narcissism" to indicate an excessive self-absorption that reduces the capacity to relate to others.

Freud considered that all people begin life in a blissful state he called "primary narcissism." In this state no distinction between self and world exists, hence no painful tensions in the form of as-yet-unfulfilled desires of the subject for any object; and therefore no conscious experience of drives and frustrations.

As the infant develops, it separates itself from its surroundings, and begins to experience needs for other things. As it grows, these needs put pressure on the developing ego to acquire the skills necessary to fulfill them, and so the ego adapts to object-reality. All the energy which in infancy was bound exclusively to the subject in this way slowly extends out and becomes bound up in the subject's pursuit of objects. This process is normal development.

Freud originally described the essence of neurosis as an interruption in this smooth transition from subject-bound to object-bound libido. He described these interruptions as follows: the childhood libido reaches out, fascinated by the objects of its desire. But being as yet insufficiently adapted to succeed, it fails to attain its goal. To compensate for this failure in adaptation, and for the consequent lack of gratification, an alternate, easier form of gratification is sought, one with which the ego is already familiar: The libido regresses and reactivates an earlier form of adaptation; it reactivates the blissful state of narcissism now called "secondary narcissism."

In this view, a narcissistic neurosis consists of the habitual seeking of gratification through self-stimulation, and the consistent refusal to take the more difficult path of adaptation, or work. You might say that it is the habitual fleeing to the Garden of Eden whenever sweat on the brow is called for, or strife between man and woman is brewing. The grandiose fantasy is preferred to the modest accomplishment; the brief, idealized affair, or masturbation, is preferred to the rocky long-term commitment.

Jung's extremely important modification of this idea is that the retreat to earlier forms of psychic life and behavior, to secondary narcissism, is not only or even primarily an alternate means of gratification. It is rather the necessary way that as yet unused *instinctive* modes of adaptation, latent within the psyche, are released. Thus, the retreat to the narcissistic state releases archetypal fantasies, and these fantasies are the representations in consciousness of inherited, but as yet unused, adaptive behaviors. The regression, therefore, is not in itself neurotic, but rather, it is the sign of a compensatory process of the psyche, whose purpose is enhanced adaptation.

Early in his career, Jung equated narcissism with introversion. The general notion that introversion *per se* is pathological stems from the early Freudian idea that narcissism is a substitute employed where adaptation to object-reality, or extraversion, has failed. In consequence of his expansion of Freud's conception, Jung separated the two terms, and the general turning inward of libido—introversion—was recognized as a servant of psychological development rather than as an enemy to it.

If we were to leave off our description of introversion (narcissism) here, we would be left with the following: introversion, while not *per se* pathological is, nonetheless, a function of the psyche that is called into play only under pathological circumstances. Jung took the matter one step further. With the publication of *Psychological Types*, he presented the idea that introversion does not occur only in response to failures of extraversion, but that the habitual turning of attention inward to the self is a normal function of the psyche which, in some individuals, actually predominates in degree over the habitual turning of attention outward to objects. To summarize, narcissism or introversion can be 1) a pathological state; 2) a compensatory response (regression in the service of the ego); 3) a normal form of psychological development.

This last idea of Jung's means that there is such a thing as normal narcissism. It implies that, to some extent, narcissism or introversion is a necessary aspect of all individuals and that, like adaptation to the outer world, there is such a thing as better or worse sorts of adaptation to the inner world. That neuroses can develop which are narcissistic not in the sense that the narcissism *per se* is the neurotic response to failures of external adaptation, but narcissistic in the sense that they are failures to develop healthy introversion, failures to develop a proper form and degree of narcissism.

This is precisely the case with *puer/puella*. Explicit or implicit in most descriptions of the *puer* is the idea that the neurosis consists largely of a failure to adapt to external reality. The idea I want to introduce is that the *puer's* failure to adapt to reality, when such is the case, is not primary. Rather, the primary feature of *puer* psychology is the failure to develop a particular sort of narcissism; it is a failure of introverted adaptation; and the failure to adapt to externals, when present, is a secondary consequence of this inner failure. Hence, treatment which selects and aims at adaptation to outer reality is at best treating a secondary symptom while the core of the neurosis remains untouched.

Still following Jung, I want to look at Ovid's myth in a way slightly different than we are accustomed to. After reading Friedrich Creuzer's *Symbolism and Mythologies of the Ancient Races*, Jung wrote, ". . . it was as if I were in an imaginary madhouse and were beginning to treat and analyze all the centaurs, nymphs, gods and goddesses in Creuzer's book as though they were my patients."



If we look at the story of Narcissus in this way, we can ask why it is that Narcissus falls in love with his reflection. The answer is that, presumably, he loves what he needs and has been unable to become conscious of otherwise. He does not fall in love with, for instance, his projected anima image because there is some other more compelling image that remains unconscious. And that would be, for Narcissus, the image of himself. He is unconscious of himself, or more currently, we would say he does not know who he is, he lacks a sense of identity and so turns outward to gain a reflection of himself in the fashion he cannot accomplish inwardly, alone.

The sense of identity requires the capacity to properly reflect oneself, i.e., one of the basic functions of introversion is exactly to maintain a stable sense of identity. Perhaps I can go so far as to claim that the ever-greater refinement of this sense of identity is the actual purpose of introversion. Now this may sound unnecessarily trivial. Can it really be that the whole richness of the inner world is nothing but a device to ensure an identity? Herman Melville, in *Moby Dick* wrote: ". . . and still deeper the meaning of that story of Narcissus who, because he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned. But that same image we ourselves see in all rivers and oceans. It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all." The simple question of personal identity, when pursued far enough, will lead to very deep waters. The mystic knows that the question, "who am I?", asked persistently enough and answered precisely enough will lead to the deepest waters of all.

Though we are not concerned directly with the mystical goal of the question, "who am I?", being more interested here in its daily aspects, we shouldn't forget that the daily answer is in fact rooted in the deeper answer of the Self. The central function of introversion can be looked at as if there were a constant voice, usually just out of the reach of hearing, which asks, over and over, "who am I?" The sense of identity is the sense that similarly, perhaps also out of the range of hearing and usually inarticulately, there is some answer there.

Just as a long, healthy, developing relationship with another person rests on an unspoken core of basic trust, so, too, the life-long relationship with oneself—the healthy development of narcissism or introversion—rests on the presence of this unspoken answer. And similarly, just as the lack of trust in a relationship with another will lead to severe disturbances in that relationship, the deep lack of a sense of answer to the question "who am I?" will lead, over years, to a disturbed relationship to oneself. Just as the person who essentially cannot trust his companion expends his energy in the constant, fruitless effort to gain and then regain assurances of loyalty, so, too, does the person who lacks a sense of identity expend his energy, like Narcissus, in constant, repeated, selfish-seeming efforts to obtain what he lacks. In short, the proper development

of introversion rests on the deep-seated sense of having an identity. Later we will see how the lack of identity in the *puer* affects both his relation to himself, and secondarily, his relation to others.

## *II. THE CHILDHOOD SELF AND THE ORIGIN OF PUER PSYCHOLOGY*

What events lead to the *puer*? To answer we need first make a rough sketch of how the Self constellates and of what the consequences of this proper constellation are in the emerging personality. The constellation of the Self in childhood has a definite effect on the ego, similar to later, more conscious experiences of the Self: it catalyzes a coalescing of ego fragments to form a functional unity. This coming-together is marked by greatly improved functioning, just as later in life, a loss of the sense of identity is accompanied by a severe decrease in the capacities of the ego as it returns to a state analagous to the one prevailing in childhood before the appearance of the Self.

An example: an analysand recalled having awakened one afternoon from a nap at the age of two and a half with the realization of who she was, and with the sudden knowledge that *she* could decide for herself whether or not to take a nap. She called her parents into her room and announced to them that from that day hence she was no longer taking afternoon naps.

This early, abrupt kind of experience of identity is marked by specific feelings. These are of a certain specialness and importance, even of grandeur or god-likeness, of omniscience and omnipotence. These feelings themselves suggest that it is, indeed, the Self which, under the surface, has been constellated.

At the core of later adult identity is therefore what we might call a necessary inflation. The child, as part of the normal constellation of the Self, needs to experience a grandiose enlargement of his sense of who he is. Thus, the two and a half year-old could order his parents into his room with the voice of the Self and assert authority over them.

This is the way that the Self is experienced in childhood. The "childhood Self," as I will from now on refer to it, remains at the core of the later experience of identity by providing, beyond all rational argument and relativizations in the face of social and physical reality, a deep belief in one's ultimate worth and value. This early experience of the Self provides the basis, too, of later healthy introversion. That is, the child who has deeply experienced this sense of unity and grandeur knows that, in times of frustration and failure, he can always look inward and touch a sense of worthiness. This act of turning to himself, and so learning to depend on himself, becomes a habit.

In the normal course of development the effect of the childhood Self on the child's identity becomes greatly modified. At the time of its



constellation he experiences himself as far more potent than he actually is. This is the time in childhood when imagination is at its peak; where the child can play at being a king or queen, a warrior, a homemaker, a parent, an explorer, a villain, all with equal ease. It is as if, in imagination, the full range of what it means to be human—the image of the Anthropos—is available to the child. No human capacity is too great or too demeaning to be embraced in the life of fantasy and play. However, the child is faced with the task of increasing adaptation to mundane reality, and in this his capacities are as undeveloped as the imaginative capacities of the childhood Self are rich.

As the child is impelled into reality by his grandiose fantasies, the inevitable result is frustration. This frustration is a necessary and good thing. If the child experiences it slowly, piece by piece, the fantasies of who he is, generated by the Self, will be slowly modified and made smaller. Simultaneously, the capacities and functions of the ego, through exercise, will grow larger and more efficient. Late in adolescence, ideally, a point will be reached where the idealizations of himself and the pressure to grandeur exerted by the Self will have shrunk to the point where they match his increasing abilities.

At this point a new, adult, and more extraverted process can begin. The young adult still has a deep inner sense of his specialness and worth, the heritage of the childhood Self, but his fantasies of who he is are more limited. The sense of specialness lends to his goals and desires a barely conscious sense of numinosity, making them consistently worth pursuing. But now, instead of the frustration he experienced earlier, when his fantasies were greater than his capacities, he experiences validation of his image of himself. Now his idea of who he is, of his talents and limitations, correspond to his actual abilities. He learns that he is indeed who he has come to hope he is and he gains a renewed sense of satisfaction from this verification. In this way he achieves and reinforces a stable identity.

There are two ways this process can go wrong and produce the *puer* later in life. First, the constellation of the Self can be consistently obstructed; second, having been constellated the Self can be protected from the limitations of reality which modify and reduce the grandiose sense of identity it generates.

*Puer* psychology in the man is sometimes traced (von Franz, *Puer Aeternus*, Spring, 1961) to early experiences of a mother who attacks a boy's emerging masculinity. A classical psychoanalytic view of the same development would trace it to excessive fears of castration by the father (this fear being proportional to the attachment to the mother). Each of these views are similar in locating the origin of *puer* psychology rather later (age 3-5) than I do, by attributing a sexual character to it, and in providing an explanation that lends itself more readily to masculine

psychology. However, *puers* are to be found no less commonly amongst women than men. This, plus the fact that *puers* of each gender tend towards a more or less blurred sexual identity, suggests that the origin of the *puer* is earlier, before identity becomes further differentiated along gender lines.

I would say that the *puer* may result from a parental milieu which, in a roughly eighteen month to a two year old child, habitually disrupts any sign of *assertiveness*, of action or fantasies that carry not the hallmark of masculinity, but of specialness and grandeur. This kind of assertiveness is equally present, at certain ages, in both boys and girls. Disrupting it will generate later disturbances of identity on top of which problems with masculinity and femininity will be overlaid. The kind of disruption I have in mind is akin to the habit we all share in greater or lesser degree, of attacking inflations we sense in others (and, indeed, the origin of this habit is in our own early experiences of having it done to us).

The disruption of the childhood Self, as it constellates, will return the child again and again to a preceding state we call fragmentation, unless he can find a haven where his inflation is accepted—with a grandparent, another adult friend, or with a therapist.

If the disruption remains uncountered, the child will come to internalize the parental disapproval of the childhood Self, and the child will then himself later take over the role of undermining his idealizations of himself. If it persists into adulthood, this internal criticism will return whenever a new idea, an enthusiasm, a spirit of hope or a self-gratifying fantasy arises. Every hopeful response to the question, "who am I?" will be stopped with, "oh, that's just an inflation." In the child, as part of the innate urge to development, the Self will attempt to constellate. Thus, an internal vicious circle is established; each constellation of the Self, bringing with it a tide of grandiose fantasies, is followed by a tide of self-criticism and re-fragmentation.

This cycling between states of grandeur in which the Self is constellated, and states of despair in which the Self is fragmented, is a typical feature of *puer* psychology and the source of the *puer's* exquisite sensitivity. If he does not himself deliver the blow that ushers in fragmentation, the least criticism from another will do it.

The persistence of a state of fragmentation, though sometimes induced by external events, is not dependent upon them. The Self will reconstellate, in its own time. Thus, apologies and reasonable explanations which appeal to the ego have little effect. A person suffering from such a fragmentation will remain depressed, sullen, or angry regardless of attempts to undo the damage, often to the chagrin, frustration, and guilt of the one who seemed to have caused it.

When reconstellated in the *puer*, the Self is in its childhood form and thus especially liable to refragmentation. It has not been tempered by the



immersion in reality, and it reacts as it does in a child. This sensitivity accounts for the essential similarity between children of insufficiently supportive parents and those of excessively supportive ones. In the latter instance, the Self is allowed to constellate, but it remains insulated from the frustrations of real life that make identity less grandiose but more cohesive. In this case, the grandiose fantasies are not only accepted, they are pushed. The parents overstimulate the child's sense of specialness and press him to behave and to accomplish beyond his age. Precociousness becomes the currency he exchanges for love and admiration.

Such a child can, in effect, become addicted to the childhood Self. He will later devote much of his life to seeking experiences which maintain or re-establish the grandiose constellation, while avoiding frustrations that diminish his sense of specialness.

*Puers* from each kind of upbringing strike others as being narcissistic: the introversion of each is engaged in a ceaseless effort to maintain the experience of the childhood Self, and each will choose external circumstances—drugs, brief affairs, intense physical or mental activities—that enhance this experience. Both will appear inordinately sensitive, and both are liable to radical and sudden shifts in self-esteem.

There is another source which also can yield *puer* psychology. This third source is the presence of great talent. A gift, in proportion to its strength, can generate varying degrees of *puer* psychology, and thus, in the course of self-exploration, one can set off on a relatively fruitless search for the roots of one's neurosis in the relationship to one's parents. On the other hand, the fantasy of being gifted is one of the most frequent self-definitions generated by the childhood Self, leading to the self-serving redefinition of one's flaws as the necessary price of genius. Since this latter problem may occur as easily in a genuinely gifted individual as in a relatively ungifted one, the matter is confusing. It is important to distinguish between an objective assessment of ability, and the need to consider oneself especially able.

Talent produces *puer* psychology in the following way. As in the ungifted, the constellated childhood Self produces fantasies of omnipotence and grandeur in the gifted child; however, he meets with far fewer frustrations in his attempt to realize these fantasies than does the ungifted child. So, for instance, the magical, childish way to play an instrument with little or no practice is, for the musically gifted child, nearly possible. The protean diversity of the Self, the Anthropos, is more than just a rich inflation for the multigifted child. In fact he comes close to being able to do everything.

As a result, the gifted child meets with less pressure to modify his grandiose self-image than does the ungifted child. His capacities meet his fantasies, and he is confirmed in a view of himself, not in late adolescence,

but very early on, when that view retains much of its original splendor. His parents, in their astonishment and pride, reflect back to him a true view of himself, and not the artificial inflation of the excessively supportive parent.

Thus, the development of the gifted child resembles the development of the child in an overly supportive environment. He is prey to the essential *puer* feature of unstable identity, because he rests upon a less modified Self than does the normal child, and his sense of identity is consequently more labile. Naturally, the gifted child staves off fragmentation, and maintains a high, in the fashion he is most adept: by the exercise of his talents. It is, therefore, in this area that he is most sensitive to criticism and why, so commonly, criticism of a creative individual's products ushers in fragmentation of his identity.

## *III. PUER PSYCHOLOGY IN THE ADULT*

Some of the characteristic features of the *puer* syndrome can be related to the preceding model. The most general feature of this model is that in the *puer*, the sense of identity is closely tied to the cycles of the Self, and relatively little of it is derived from or capable of verification by achievements of the ego in the physical or social worlds. There are two broad categories we can examine from this point of view. One is the area of goals and achievements; the other is the area of personal relationships. In both these areas there are two basic sources for *puer* characteristics. That is, some characteristics stem directly from the states of fragmentation or inflation, while other characteristics stem from defenses against experiencing either state.

Within the area of goals and achievements we can look at two things: problems in setting and reaching realistic goals, and fantasies of specialness. A characteristic feature of the *puer* is the pressure of intense, recurrent fantasies of grandeur. These fantasies are the translation in consciousness of, and a way of defining identity, based on the childhood Self. Depending on the degree of modification by experience, the fantasies correspond more or less to the pure image of the Self.

The most common fantasies today can be placed on a scale of decreasing grandeur: 1. Messianic fantasies in which personal identity is equivalent to Self. 2. Fantasies of being spiritually chosen, or of having great spiritual accomplishment. 3. Fantasies of being a genius, or of being gifted and especially creative. 4. The wish for great fame or power. 5. The wish for great wealth. 6. The wish for professional success.

Keeping in mind that the core of each fantasy remains the Self, we see that as the pressure exerted by the childhood Self decreases, and realistic



capacities increase, a point is reached where the fantasies become realistic. Where the point is reached depends, of course, upon the individual's actual ability. In the course of a successful analysis, the fantasies of grandeur will follow some such descent.

It is often overlooked that these fantasies are not only gratifying; they are painful. The *puer* experiences these fantasies as a call to action, and to the degree that he has a genuine appreciation of reality and its limitations the failure to live up to the call will be experienced as an inner reproach that itself reinduces fragmentation and a sense of worthlessness. He often "knows" that his fantasies are unrealistic, but the *puer* is unable to experience satisfaction from anything less. Thus he is either forced to greater and greater efforts (often of an exhibitive nature where the feedback is large and immediate) or he splits off the pressure entirely and loses all motivation ("being laid-back"). He never gains any true satisfaction from the achievements he accomplishes since they never can match the demands of the childhood Self.

When the talents of such individuals are sufficient, they will commonly follow a meteoric rise in a profession that keeps them before the approving reflection of the public: thus today's plethora of superstars and the desperate struggle for fame, "becoming somebody." *Puers* commonly fantasize or dream of flying. I consider this the essential intrapsychic representation of the pressure to specialness and grandeur exerted by the childhood Self. Such dreams and fantasies (and more generally the experience or symbolic representation of "being high") are often interpreted as meaning that the individual is out of touch with reality. Conversely, they are interpreted as indications of a spiritual ascent. This interpretation is sometimes correct, if by "reality" we mean the outside world and its demands, but only secondarily. Rather, the motif of flying represents the way in which the sense of specialness raises a person beyond his limitations. Man's age-old dream of flying has always been the prototypical expression of the urge to escape the restraints of mundane existence. It is fitting that such dreams should have as their source the Self. Likewise, the motif of crashing is as common to *puer* fantasy as that of flying. The two types of dreams represent the polar states of the Self: constellation and fragmentation.

Therapeutically, it is crucial that the *puer* become familiar with the way these two states are intertwined and that by experiencing and understanding how behind every high is a sense of desperation, and behind every low a struggle for glory. Dreams often signal the appearance of this realization. For instance, "I am lifted up by a giant parachute drop machine, but without a parachute. When it gets to the top it drops me and I crash to the earth. There it picks me up again. This happens over and over."

A common feature of such dreams, as in this instance, is the mechanical nature of the cycling. This corresponds to an introspective feature of *puer* psychology that the individual at least partly aware of his nature will express: "I cannot help getting high, nor can I prevent the crash that follows." As a result, accusing such a person of being inflated, when he is, rarely has a beneficial effect. Rather, it exacerbates the underlying feeling of frustration, isolation and helplessness in the face of what he already knows is a problem.

Because of the widespread existence of occult and spiritual groups of every sort, the messianic fantasy—being a guru of greater or lesser following—has become much more acceptable, and commonplace, than it once was. This ambition, and the somewhat lesser of being perfectly enlightened, are common in the *puer* and commonly acted on concretely. Why is this so?

Here again, the rarely mentioned fact is that the grandeur of the idea of perfect spiritual attainment exerts a powerful fascination on the *puer*. By taking on the role of master or disciple he acquires an identity that carries with it the numinosity of the Self in its most undiluted concrete form. Furthermore, the general sense that spiritual attainment can lift one out of the mundane world, particularly since it finds support in certain hermetic approaches to the spirit, relieves the constellated childhood Self of daily frustrations, and preserves it in its original, unmodified form. The tenacity with which the *puer* clings to such cults stems from the price he would pay in sacrificing this attachment: fragmentation of his identity.

In her book on the *puer*, Dr. Marie-Louise von Franz remarks that the *puer* is often engaged in a quest for spirituality of the sort typical of late adolescence. I would add to her observation the following: in later adolescence the spiritual quest often quietly drops away. This happens at the point where the decreasing pressure to specialness and increasing realistic capacities meet. It can be seen that adolescent spirituality often screens a search for identity which is not being consciously acknowledged as such (though years later the person can smilingly admit that, indeed, that's what it was). When identity is found, the spiritual interests can safely be dropped. The same is true for the older *puer* personality. The intense spiritual interests often mask the missing identity. When the personal identity has been successfully forged, the spiritual quest for meaning may drop away.

Of course, this is not always the case. There are individuals whose actual gift is that of spirit. In them, resolution of the *puer* structure will yield a personal identity formed around a complex and realistic orientation towards pressing spiritual questions—Jung would have been such a person. But the spirituality of such individuals is highly modified from the ideal generated by the childhood Self. Because of the conflict



with reality, it lacks the degree of intense, covert personal grandeur of *puer* spirituality, and further, it is not attracted to perfected, closed systems with guaranteed results. For such individuals, spirit and meaning are always great open questions; they are led onward by doubt rather than belief; by what they don't know than by what they do. The missing identity makes it impossible for the *puer/puella* to maintain this sort of openness. The lack of internal certainty creates a narcissistic dependency on what is perceived as external truths.

An interesting question in this regard is why Jungian psychology is so attractive to the *puer*, especially when Jung himself conceived of his work as addressed primarily to the questions of later life. The answer, I believe, is this: Jungian psychology holds out the possibility of a close relation to the Self and to the archetypes and it is this that the *puer* seeks. However, the *puer* seeks it for different reasons, and seeks a different sort of close relation to the Self, than that which concerned Jung. Whereas Jung sought to work out an *objective* relationship between the Self and an ego which sensed an already established personal identity (by objective I mean, precisely, as an object of awareness), the *puer* seeks the Self as subject in order to acquire a personal identity. Jung and his early students found themselves in the way of individuation out of necessity; the *puer* seeks individuation because of its appeal.

Another fantasy related to the wish for individuation and common today to the *puer* is that of being creative. As before, I want to make a clear distinction between creativity *per se*, and the need to consider oneself creative, which may be present in both creative and relatively uncreative individuals. The fantasy of being creative belongs to the constellated childhood Self.

Being creative was not always the hallmark of personal identity that it has become today. During the Middle Ages, much of the most creative work was anonymous (as in the illuminated manuscripts of the monks), or collective (as in the great cathedrals which often required three generations of stonemasons to complete). "Creativity," as the word itself implies, was the prerogative of God. Psychologically, therefore, it now appears as a fantasy generated by the Self.

During the Renaissance, the identification of individuals as creators burgeoned, hence the rise of the "Renaissance Man" and the great concern during the Renaissance with cataloging the signs of genius. The Romantics, hearkening back to the Renaissance in the way that the Renaissance hearkened back to the Greeks, disseminated the cult of genius more widely with the poets as, in Shelley's phrase, "the unacknowledged legislators of mankind." We, inheriting the Romantic tradition and making of it a popular product, now require creative writing, creative footwear, creative marriages, and creative divorces. Ironically, the fantasy of being creative can be a great obstacle to actually

being so. The pressure that this fantasy places on the *puer* is often what inhibits or weakens his expressive capabilities. This leads us to the more general topic of ambition.

In spite of their great ambitions, spiritual, creative, fame-seeking or otherwise, many *puers* are described as lazy. "Laziness" is not exactly accurate. It is true that *puers* have typical sorts of work disturbances, but I do not believe these disturbances derive from an unwillingness to work. That is, they are not disturbances of the ego, or the will. Indeed, many *puers* know quite well that they have high ambitions but find themselves unable to properly pursue them.

The painful tension between ambitions and the incapacity to fulfil them is in my experience the single most common presenting complaint.

And, some *puers* are overworkers who are unable to stop working or enjoy the fruits of their labor. Such individuals seek analysis less frequently because they gain, for a time at least, sufficient satisfaction from the image of themselves as hard-working to obscure the underlying emptiness.

The inability to work coupled with great ambition is a source of distress to many *puers*. They will often come into analysis having failed at work of a creative sort: they have writer's block, or stage fright, or, commonly are unable to complete their Ph.D. theses. Frequently they engage in what appear to be deliberately self-destructive behaviors: they will have dropped out of school in the semester before graduation; they will have failed to study for a final exam or a professional school admissions test (though having performed excellently in all the preceding work or requirements); they put off important tasks until the last minute even though the task may involve no more than a phone call, or they procrastinate on a large project so long that they must do the whole thing in a rush and thereby guarantee an impressive accomplishment but a mediocre product.

More commonly, *puers* will simply not finish projects that they have already begun, either by ceasing work altogether, or by continuing to rework what they have done, so that it is never finished. In these and similar instances, the problem can be traced to the pressures exerted by the constellated childhood Self. The problem is the fear of failure, and more specifically the fear of a failure where, by definition, failure is guaranteed. The *puer* will commonly acknowledge that fear and that it paralyzes him or causes him to undo what he has already done. This is most easily seen in cases of stage fright where the fear and paralysis is acute, intense and evident. It is less easily seen in long-term projects such as a thesis. In all cases, what is less accessible to consciousness is the fact that the project must fail no matter how great the actual success. This stems from the fact that no success can live up to the core fantasy of the childhood Self.



This core is the archetype of the divine child. The individual narcissistically bound to this image for identity can experience satisfaction from a concrete achievement only if it matches the grandeur of this archetypal image. It must have the qualities of greatness, absolute uniqueness, of being the best, and more than anything else it must be prodigiously precocious.

This latter quality explains the enormous fascination of child prodigies, and also explains why even a great success yields no permanent satisfaction for the *puer*: being an adult, no accomplishment is precocious unless he stays artificially young or equates his accomplishments with those of old age (hence the premature striving after the wisdom of those who are much older).

The *puer* lives with a constant, vague sense of having failed since he never quite lives up to the archetypal demand. Projected onto his surroundings, he therefore sees the world around him as similarly having failed. The time of glory was earlier, in his childhood or in the younger days of the culture. Nothing in the present, his present or his society's present, no new accomplishment can ever make up for the defect and so the past is tinged with nostalgia. This attitude strongly affects *puer* aesthetics, which runs to camp tastes and antiquarianism. The yearning backwards is not so much a yearning for the mother nor for the *mundus imaginalis*, as it has variously been explained, but for the Self and for the time of life when the Self had not yet met up with reality.

The beginning of a project is marked by fantasies of its grandeur and specialness, and particularly by fantasies of the grandeur and specialness of the creator. The project is thus embarked upon with a strong sense of identity whose source is the reconstellated childhood Self. But as the project drags on, the enthusiasm fades; completion nears and it begins to look like simply another book, or thesis, or piece of music like thousands of others. With the dawning of this realization the reestablished sense of identity begins to crumble and depression sets in. The project is either abandoned for a new one that reconstellates the Self or the fragmentation is staved off by endless revisions according to an impossibly high set of standards.

Alternatively, as completion approaches, methods are devised to snatch a grandiose defeat from the jaws of banal victory. To barely pass the admissions test, but without studying at all, comes closer to preserving prodigality than does an excellent performance as a result of strenuous effort. One prefers to be known, and to know oneself, as brilliant if erratic, than as a successful drudge. The *puer* prefers his fantasied potentials to his actual capacities because the former preserves more of the flavor of the childhood Self than the latter.

The behavior of *puers* who, rather than appearing lazy, seem to be addicted to work, belongs more properly to the defenses against the

childhood Self than to the constellation itself. The tendency to overwork is one particular instance of a general defense against the *puer* cycle of inflation and fragmentation. This general defense is characterized by the premature adoption of *senex* attitudes. The features of *senex* psychology are rigidity, orderliness, boundedness. The typical *senex* attitude towards the *puer* (seen in someone else) is superiority and the scorn of the adult for the immature: "when is he going to grow up and face reality," or, in the ironic words of the rock song that opened the *puer* era, "get a job."

The virtues of discipline, self-control, responsibility, hard work, conservatism, orderliness, and moral rectitude are drawn to an extreme in the *senex* personality. These qualities serve as the ideal enclosure for a self that is otherwise liable to fragmentation. By translating his ambitions into ceaseless effort the reformed *puer* (as he is apt to think of himself) staves off the fragmentation of identity which threatens whenever he is idle. In effect, he avoids the experience of both inflation and fragmentation by constructing a rigid, artificial style of maturity to which he clings instead for his identity. From this perspective he treats his own grandiose fantasies ruthlessly, should ever they begin to emerge. Like Chronos devouring his children, he represses any child-god urges that threaten the established order with destabilizing inflationary fantasies.

It commonly happens that *puers* around the age of thirty suddenly develop such a *senex* compensation. The sudden shift can easily be mistaken for a cure. Indeed, like a reformed alchoholic who's joined the Salvation Army, reformed *puers* frequently tout their conversion as such. But in effect, one form of addiction has been exchanged for another, less threatening, one. One such analysand, just before going through a period of time when he felt himself similarly reformed, brought in a dream that he was being placed on a methadone maintenance program.

It also happens that the shift will occur the other way around, a long-standing *senex* personality suddenly decompensating to reveal the underlying *puer* structure. This reverse shift occurred frequently during the late nineteen sixties and early nineteen seventies under the impact of youth culture and psychedelic drugs. Thus, one forty year old man had held a responsible position with an aerospace firm for over fifteen years when he suddenly announced he was giving it all up to pursue his childhood dream of becoming a violinist. The goal was unrealistic, but after some years he made a successful new career as a freelance writer. In this case the unmodified childhood Self had been dammed up for years behind a wall of respectability. It finally burst out in the open where it could be dealt with analytically, modified, and made the basis of a new style of life more satisfying than the previous one. The second career he



finally settled on was more realistic than his initial fantasy, but still carried with it some of the grandeur and specialness of creativity he sought.

Latent *puers* with well-constructed *senex* defenses are more common today, I believe, than five or six years ago. The disillusionment with youth culture, the Vietnam war, Nixon, Watergate and the deteriorating economic situation have all contributed to this effect. Such individuals enter analysis with no specific work complaint, but rather with a vague and disturbing sense of having no zest in life; of their successes being meaningless and often with marital difficulties or following a divorce. In many such instances a genuine second half of life crisis is not brewing, but a deferred crisis of the first half.

The *senex* defense, then, is a defense primarily of the state of the constellated childhood Self. The defense on the one hand preserves the grandiose fantasies in their pristine state, thereby staving off fragmentation of the sense of identity; on the other hand by consciously maintaining an artificial identity, the presence of the childhood Self with its concomitant pressures is split off from consciousness.

There is another common type of defense which, too, produces personality features typical of the *puer* and *puella*. That is a defense against the experience of fragmentation. This type of defense is seductive and easily misunderstood. I am referring to a defensive identification with one of the fragments of the fragmented Self. To make this state more clear, I would like to describe the process of fragmentation in greater detail.

An antique hermetic legend has it that the soul, before birth, is led by Hermes downward through the seven planetary spheres. From each planetary god the soul acquires its characteristics and capacities. After death, Hermes returns and leads the soul upwards along the path it followed before, and the soul returns to each god the qualities it there acquired (hopefully none the worse for wear). Similar motifs, that the soul is a composite of archetypal aspects, can be found elsewhere. In alchemy, the labor of the *memento mori*, the remembrance of death, is variously symbolized as the purification and synthesis of the seven metals, or as a journey to the seven planets; the same idea is inherent in the astrological divisions of character.

The unity of the personality may therefore be conceived as the relatively harmonious functioning of numerous archetypes. We refer to this functional unity as the Self. Keeping in mind that the archetypes may be considered the representations in consciousness of instincts, the Self as a concept referring to the body is the integration into a single functioning organism of a multiplicity of instincts each of which, in a given situation, might, by itself, seek opposing goals. Whenever we find ourselves in a situation where the instincts that are aroused are functioning well

together, we experience a sense of well-being, of wholeness, of having it all together, of being someone, even if transiently. If we discover one area where we have this experience frequently, we are apt to seek it out, cultivate it, and so create our identity around it.

The *puer* is subject to the sudden, radical fragmentation of the Self. The fragments are the archetypes. During a state of fragmentation, in addition to a lack of identity and lack of sense of self-worth, the individual also experiences a sense of inner conflict. No energy is available for goal-directed activities, and though action is possible, an intense inner pressure to act in a multitude of directions is nonetheless felt. He says, "I don't know what to do with myself." Although the ego is intact, the Self is not. No single functioning unitary motive exists, but rather a multiplicity of urges based on the fragmented, independently functioning instincts.

This state of affairs is very difficult to simply accept and so, in the *puer*, it is commonly defended against. If it is impossible to reinduce the preceding high—and it usually is impossible without technical aids such as drugs—the individual will, at the point of fragmentation, form a rapid, intense identification with one of the fragments of the Self, that is, with one of the archetypes. The lost sense of unity, identity and grandeur that rested on the childhood Self is replaced by a more or less temporary narcissistic dependency on a single archetype. By "temporary," I mean from a few hours to a few years. In the latter case, an entire false identity can be constructed and *puer* psychology becomes more accurately described as borderline.

A false personality is thereby structured which has the Dickens-like stereotypy of any archetype concretely enacted. The missing unity of the Self is replaced by the inherent unity and predictability typical of each of the great archetypes. This identification necessarily entails a severe restriction of the richness of the personality, but the price seems worth the reestablishment of some sense of being somebody.

Just as workaholism is typical of the *senex* defense against inflation, the archetypal defense against fragmentation is marked by compulsive activity in the mode determined by the archetype. I call the compulsive activity that accompanies a defensive archetypal identification "focusing activities" because they serve to concentrate and focus the sense of identity. They usually involve the extremely intense engagement of one instinct or aspect of the personality to the exclusion of all else. If we divide the Self up into the hermetic archetypes to provide a rough *schema*, it becomes clear. Thus, if the identification is with Mercury, the response to fragmentation is intense intellectualism; if with Venus, the response is compulsive sexuality; if with Mars, the response is aggression; if with Jupiter, the response is the haughty attempt to dominate; if with Saturn, the response is depressive withdrawal.



Three types of response we are familiar with are the three closest planets—intellectualization, compulsive sexuality, (that is, masturbation, promiscuity, Don Juanism and so-called perversions), and sudden aggression. These responses do not occur in a vacuum, nor are they simply character traits of a *puer*. When each occurs it is as a specific type of response to and indicative of a preceding fragmentation of the Self.

It is important to realize that these activities are *not* being engaged in as a direct expression of genuine instinctive arousal; nor are they behavioral expressions of a deep-seated core to the personality (i.e., this god, therefore this character trait). They are secondary, defensive and dynamically understandable consequences of the breakup of the Self. Most people can assume a spectrum of responses; often they are mixed in any instance. Our inclination to assign an individual to a particular archetype on the basis of his response stems from an individual's propensity to choose certain archetypes and from the failure to realize its defensive nature.

During sex under these circumstances, concentration is focused exclusively on oneself and sex therefore acquires what is commonly called a narcissistic quality. Because it is engaged in for the focusing of the personality *via* instinctive arousal, the partner is relatively unimportant and can just as well be missing. Hence, masturbation is a frequent means of defending against a preceding fragmentation. When the sense of fragmentation is directly acknowledged, the sexual arousal diminishes drastically.

Individuals who habitually identify with the sexual instinct do not usually have sexual disfunctions. On the contrary, an archetype is chosen which functions well precisely because it cannot otherwise serve the purpose of holding the identity together. If such individuals have any complaint, it is a vague sense of mechanicality and abstraction. A commonly reported phenomenon is that of watching the act take place as if one were an observer, as portrayed, for example, in Woody Allen's film, *Annie Hall.*

Compulsive sexuality as a focusing activity has become a culture-wide phenomenon. The overwhelming flood of sexually stimulating advertising, the widespread distribution of pornography, the rise of free-sex nightclubs on the two coasts and the general immersion of American culture in erotica can be understood as the collective response to widespread failures of identity and Self-fragmentation.

Other defensive responses are based on the hero archetype. Thus a blow to the Self may be followed by high-speed driving, daredevil risk-taking and other dangerous feats. Here again, these activities are sought because they require intense concentration and the deep activation of

instinctive behaviors which creates a temporary feeling of cohesiveness. We loosely think of these activities as escapes: the man loses his job, and so races off at break-neck speed in his car. They are less escapes than the desperate attempt to avoid experiencing the state of fragmentation which has ensued.

Sports frequently serve the same purpose. One young man responded to the breakup of his love-relationship by running almost the whole night. Here again, the loss he experienced threatened the breakup of his personality, he was on the verge of becoming nobody, and the intense physical activity served to preserve some degree of unity. Just as the shift towards sexuality in American culture can be understood as a collective response to the breakup of the Self in many individuals, the shift in taste towards more violent sports, from baseball to football, can be understood similarly. At the extreme, sport finally blends into overt violence as the struggle to preserve a sense of cohesion grows more desperate. Thus the gladiatorial matches that preceded the breakdown of the Roman Empire. Violence of varying degrees of intensity is itself another common *puer* response to fragmentation.

A Freudian might interpret a rage response as the assertion of phallic aggression in the face of castration threat. We would be tempted to call it an assertion of masculinity in the face of its threatened loss. But the depth of the arousal, its non-specific target, and the fact that it occurs in both men and women points out its deeper source in the fragmentation of the Self.

On a culture-wide basis, I believe that wars are the final consequence and last ditch effort of a nation to stave off widespread individual inner fragmentation. Perhaps no better example exists than prewar Germany, where all the preceding symptoms, as well as a literature of inner fragmentation, prevailed. In effect, when the Self disappears, the god of war steps in. And, indeed, the romance of war consists of the enhanced sense of personal identity and glory which warfare provides.

One point I want to emphasize, because it can be a tricky one for Jungians well-versed in the content of archetypal forms, is that for the *puer* there are times when the archetype chosen as a defense is to a large degree therapeutically irrelevant. It is a great mistake to get bogged down in an analysis of the phenomenology of the archetype chosen in response to fragmentation, as fascinating as this phenomonology may be from the point of view of research. A lot of attention paid at this point to the question "what archetype do I follow?" "what is my myth?" "which god?" and to the idea of living out or into that myth diverts attention from the deeper-seated fragmentation of the Self which precipitated the archetypal identification in the first place. An archetypal analysis here simply feeds the defense, and allows the person to more effectively ignore the seemingly small insult that set off the fragmentation, and to avoid experiencing the fragmentation itself.



Another consequence of the archetypal defense against fragmentation is hypochondria. Just as the *senex* defense against the pressures of the childhood Self causes a somatization of that pressure, the defense against fragmentation by concentrating on a fragment somatizes as anxiety about parts of the body.

The introspective impression of the body as a functioning whole is an experience in consciousness which is symbolic of the unity of the personality. Hence, in states where the sense of identity is distorted, the body-image is correspondingly distorted. The concentration upon one of the fragments of the Self is accompanied by a parallel concentration on a part of the body, instead of an even awareness of the whole. This intense focusing of attention means that the normal background sensations of that body part are magnified beyond the sensations from the rest. The result is a false impression of localized symptoms. The worrying that accompanies this focus serves three purposes. It diverts attention from the psychological state of fragmentation. It creates an artificial cohesion of the personality, albeit the nucleus of this cohesion is fear; and it replaces the diffuse anxiety accompanying fragmentation with a specific and known fear, that of illness and death, which, being something known and understandable, is easier to accept.

The correlation between single archetypes and parts of the body, and the whole body as the Self, or Anthropos, is well-known to mysticism. Paracelsus treated disease on the basis of this correspondence; similar systems of correspondence exist in Kabballah.

The next area to examine is the personal relationships of the *puer* and the problems found there. We will see how the patterns of relating, the shadow problem, and the intense but often ephemeral anima and animus entanglements all derive their specific character from the cycles of fragmentation and cohesion of the childhood Self.

The latent healing process in the *puer* psyche is most effectively engaged in the context of personal relations, whether that be in friendship, marriage, or analysis, and so this area is of even greater importance in the long run than that of goals and ambitions. Efforts that focus exclusively on spiritual and creativity problems can sometimes be sufficient, but more frequently, in my experience, they can create deeply entrenched compensations. Needless to say, there are many cases where the tendency to fragmentation is so severe that these compensations are desirable, at least for a lengthy period of consolidation, and sometimes as the best possible result. Some chronic schizophrenics seem to be in a permanent state of identification with a fragment of the Self, the institutionalized Napoleon for instance, and this identification can be considered a last ditch effort to stave off the total elimination of the personality. Acute schizophrenic episodes of the sort John Perry (*Roots of Renewal in Myth and Madness*) describes spontaneous attempts to

reconstellate the childhood Self in pure form and so begin for the first time a genuine process of development.

Personal relations are of great importance to the *puer* because someone very close to him can provide, for a time, that reflection which the *puer's* introversion is incapable of giving. Other people may see the talented *puer* as a superman; the husband, wife, close friend, or analyst can see the compensations and defenses for what they are. The stereotype of the supportive woman behind the great man illustrates how the wife takes over an introvertive, reflective function which the man, in moments of crisis, lacks. In this way, she actually comes closer to his true Self than he is, and his gratitude—"it was all her doing"—is therefore very deeply true.

We need now to return to the time in early childhood when the original constellation of the Self is determined. You will recall that one of the important functions of the parents, usually at this age the mother, is to provide a reflection of the child's emerging Self. By reflecting back to the child his specialness and grandeur, the parent helps to sustain a kind of necessary inflation. This inflation will motivate the child to move into an ever-expanding world where, by suffering tolerable defeats, the inflation will be modified and the personal identity sustained more and more by the capacities of the ego.

In situations where this reflection fails—either by its absence or its excess—the interaction of the childhood Self with the world fails to take place and normal development is interrupted. The individual then experiences, into adulthood, a constant pressure to return to the state of the constellated childhood Self so that development can proceed anew. The manifestations of *puer* psychology are therefore not so much pathological, but the expression in adulthood of a normal, long-deferred process that stems from the archetypally determined pathway of development. The reason that this process often does not simply take over and bring about a self-cure is that the individual has internalized from his childhood experiences a faulty introversion—one that either automatically attacks the Self as soon as it is constellated, or protects it from modification when frustration is sensed.

The core of *puer* relationships is this: the *puer* seeks relationships that provide him the kind of reflection he is unable to perform for himself. What appears as extraversion in the *puer* is not that at all. In effect, the *puer* does not relate to objects (in the analytic sense); he relates instead to a missing part of himself which he either sees in another or makes another perform. Objects function for the *puer* primarily as an indirect means of introversion.

There is another version of the myth of Narcissus, which, in addition to its inner meaning, illustrates the *puer* in relationships. Pausanias writes:



> There is another story about Narcissus, less popular indeed than the other, but not without some support. It is said that Narcissus had a twin sister; they were exactly alike in appearance, their hair was the same, they wore similar clothes, and went hunting together. The story goes that Narcissus fell in love with his sister, and when the girl died, he would go to the spring knowing that it was his reflection he saw, but in spite of this knowledge, finding some relief for his love imagining that he saw, not his reflection, but the likeness of his sister.

If we take this myth simply as a reflection of the *puer's* anima problem, we see right away that he seeks not so much his mother as, through the anima, himself.

There are a number of basic features to *puer* relationships. First, the *puer* gains the reflection he needs in one of two ways. Either he gains admiration from others, or he feels himself chosen by someone whom he admires greatly. Second, the *puer* will either seek out a relationship he perceives as providing this reflection, or will manipulate an existing relationship into providing it when the reflection breaks down, as it invariably does. Third, these relations occur in both relations with members of the same or opposite sex.

The first type of *puer* relationship consists in an individual, in order to maintain an identity based on the childhood Self, seeking an admirer or admirers who will reflect back to him his specialness and grandeur. While the most common situation is in friendship or marriage, this also occurs in analysis. Two common collective prototypes for this sort of relation are the performer in the midst of his crowd, and the master with his disciple or disciples. In both cases the inferior partner (the disciple or the fan) is not valued as an equal and on the basis of who he is, but rather because he serves a reflective function which preserves the superior partner's sense of specialness and the cohesion of his identity.

The relation which prevails between two such partners is often called love, but it really isn't. The performer at the end of a great performance is washed by a tide of anonymous approval and he says, "I am never more myself than when I am on stage and the audience is with me." At the end, "I love you all." But the emotion he experiences is not love, it is the feeling of wholeness, of the unitary functioning of his entire being within the compass of his talent. He is able to feel this because the audience is reflecting it back to him. He sees himself through their eyes and likes what he sees. By himself, he is uncertain, self-critical and moody. He cannot gauge with any accuracy the true extent of his capacities. One day he thinks he's great, the next day he thinks he's mediocre. The audience response verifies his deepest wish and assuages his deepest fear. They tell him he is who he hopes he is, but fears he is not, a star.

If the audience disapproves, the failure is not just of a day's efforts. It is a calamity. The disapproval precipitates a violent fragmentation of the

childhood Self. Criticism of his creative efforts is deep criticism of his very being. When he performs next, it will be in search of the perfect high, the almost mystical union with the audience that will reconstellate the Self and enable him to sense its presence.

This pattern is typical for the *puer*, nowhere more intensely than in the performing arts, which is why these are so attractive today, and also why the focus of attention has shifted unerringly to the personality of the performer. A similar pattern prevails in the relations of *puers* involved in spiritual matters where the role of performer or star is replaced by that of guru or master.

The role of master is even closer to the pure archetype than that of performer. In the master-disciple relationship both the overt content and the covert process of the relationship is the Self. The overt content speaks of the Self as it appears in the individuating adult (viz., the mystical content); the covert process of the relationship to the disciple stems, inadvertently and unconsciously, from the Self as it appears in childhood.

A common feature of both roles, and one which is recognized as typical of the *puer* in general, is what appears to be the power-complex: it is assumed that the *puer* charm, talent and loftiness of ideals hides an urgent will to dominate others. In effect, this is true, but more deeply it is only symptomatic. What the *puer* is actually trying to control is his own radically unstable sense of self-worth. It is not his control over others *per se* that matters to him—for others as such barely exist for him—but rather his control, *via* others' admiration, of his identity. When his companion fails to provide this reflection of his childhood Self, his warmth, charm and romanticism seem to give way to coldness. But neither the warmth nor the coldness are truly directed at the other person. The warmth is an expression of contentment when the childhood Self is constellated; the coldness is the absence of any relation to himself when the Self fragments. The *puer* seems to turn cold suddenly and unexpectedly in response to what seems a trifle, because he is not reacting objectively to the other person, but to highly unstable inner states that are invisible to all but the most empathic partner.

The image of Narcissus and his reflection, or of Narcissus and his twin sister, is a good representation of many *puer-puer*, *puer-puella*, or *puella-puella* dyads. Such dyads, in friendships, or in marriage, are very common today. Hence, dreams of rock stars, theatrical performances, gurus and discipleship are common motifs in the dreams of *puers*, along with the more ambition-oriented themes of flying, crashing, and magical powers. *Puers* will also seek out relationships in which they are the admirers rather than the admired. Dyadic relationships thus become complementary and a highly stable means of fending off individual internal instability. The audience serves a certain function for the performer, but in turn the performer serves a reciprocal function for the audience. The discipleship helps to maintain the internal cohesion of the master; but the master, in a reciprocal way, does the same for the disciples. The admired in a friendship or marriage needs the admirer, but no less than the reverse.



The word "admiration" is really too weak and inaccurate a word since the emotion in question is not based on the actual qualities of the object. When we love someone, and lose him, the grief we experience is based on the sense of loss of someone we desire. Our desire is frustrated, but we remain intact. In *puer* psychology, the loved one is idealized in order that, by being close to him, we can feel ourselves as someone special. When someone thus admired for introvertive purposes is lost, the loss becomes an inner catastrophe. The experience of grief is dominated by an inner sense of crumbling identity. The loss precipitates fragmentation of the childhood Self.

Accompanying the constellation of the childhood Self is a great inner pressure to live up to its demands. In a talented individual, these demands essentially can be met, and the pressure periodically relieved, by concrete achievement. Such an individual will therefore seek out situations where he is the admired. For individuals of more modest gifts, the pressure from the Self is intolerable, especially since, in so drastically failing to live up to its demands, the ensuing sense of fragmentation is heightened. The ideal situation is to be chosen as the special partner of someone idealized, to become the human counterpart of the divine twin, the master's disciple or the star's fan. Thus the hero worship of normal adolescence.

The situation is suitable for two reasons. First, the role of chosen disciple is itself nearly glorious enough to satisfy the demands of the childhood Self, especially since the idealized can be assimilated to the image of the archetypal parent of the divine child. Second, in this way the pressure to achieve is split off and projected onto another. Because the glory of the Self is a life-sustaining necessity—albeit its demands excruciating—a compromise is to project the Self on someone else and in this fashion get the best of both worlds. Thus, the other becomes the savior who suffers the cycles of glorification and fragmentation on our behalf. By complementing each other, this arrangement serves both partners well, the admirer and the admired, so long as the idealization lasts.

Many marriages, friendships and short-term relationships amongst *puers* are based on this set of interlocking demands. During the initial phase of the relationship, the roles remain fairly stable, with one partner content in the role of the idealized, the other content to be his associate. Generally there is an invisible countercurrent. The one who is idealized nonetheless needs to idealize his admirer to a degree. The reflection from someone highly respected is worth far more than the reflection of a

nobody. Thus the star exclaims,"you're wonderful!" Similarly, the partner who idealizes needs some verification that he, too, is special, since that's his motive in the first place. He therefore seeks gratitude for his idealization.

During this phase the childhood Self is mutually constellated between the partners with all the pleasurable phenomena associated with it, "before I met you, I didn't know who I was"; also, a heightened perception, more efficient functioning, a sense of meaning, purpose and wholeness. The couple appears to form a perfect, self-contained unity; introspectively, they each experience this unity in themselves.

The anima and animus are, in this situation, initially projected. But the same phenomenon occurs in homosexual couples, and because of the depth of meaning and wholeness which accompany it suggests, this phenomenon of romantic fascination—much sought after by the *puer*—seems to me to rest on a deeper basis than anima and animus projection, namely projection of the Self. Flaws in this arrangement are usually immediately apparent to both partners, but because its breakdown threatens the identity of each of the partners, a tacit collusion sets in to ignore any such defects.

The first serious trouble occurs when some incident clearly violates the idealization of one of the partners. The one whose idealization of the other has been violated will experience a sense of shattering—the shattering of his dreams he will call it—if he looks closely he will see that it is the shattering of his sense of identity.

The brevity of many *puer* relationships from one-night stands to a marriage of a couple of years is due to the fact that neither partner, because of his own needs for reflection, can tolerate the necessary coldness which follows a wounding of the Self. If, on the other hand, the partners can learn to recognize how the actions and reactions of the other are primarily not in response to himself, but to a rapid sequence of labile internal states of the Self, simple, non-reactive acceptance is possible and establishes the conditions necessary to healing.

In dyadic relationships it is possible to see how the urge to power is a secondary consequence of the childhood Self. A common feature of *puer/puella* interactions is the manipulation of one partner by the other to play a particular role crucial to the stability of the first. This maneuvering is often subtle, and the only indication that it is going on may be a slight feeling of irritation whose source is unclear. If the maneuvering fails, as it almost always does once the honeymoon is over, fights ensue. In this way a covert power struggle soon becomes established. What is important to keep in mind is that this struggle is not really a struggle for power, or ego-domination as it appears superficially. It is rather a struggle to control the source of introverted reflection which in the *puer* can only be accomplished through the eyes of another.



In such power struggles, the one feels as if he is being treated as little else but an extension of the other. This is so. The person being manipulated is being treated as if he were an externalized psychic function of the other. The person doing the manipulating experiences the same frustration and rage when the manipulation fails as does the paralyzed individual when he finds he no longer has control over his limbs. Another aspect of the motif of dismemberment is therefore the experience of one's psychological structure being spread out over an environment only minimally subject to one's control.

Similar maneuverings go on between a performer and his audience or a guru and his disciples. But, it works both ways. Once the star is established, his fans will tear him to pieces should ever he fail to carry for them the projected childhood Self. A recent example from pop culture is the fan's vituperative reaction to Bob Dylan's unexpected changes of style. Once a narcissistic complementation has been set up between any leader and his following, he is as bound as they. The rigidity of the relationship and the strength of the forces maintaining the status quo stem from the mutual common individual fear of fragmentation.

*Puer* relationships of course also involve the projection of the anima and animus, but with a difference. In a shorthand manner of speaking we could say that the anima or animus projection is highly contaminated with the Self. Behaviorally, this has the following consequence. In a non-*puer* relationship, the projection of anima or animus lends an illusory quality to each partner's perception of the other. When this illusion breaks down, disappointment ensues, but not the shattering of identity. Beneath the projection of anima and animus in the *puer* and *puella*, there is a projection of the childhood Self as well. The result is that the *puer* not only *sees* his partner in an illusory fashion, he desperately requires the illusion and so *forces* the partner to maintain it. When this fails, the *puer* is subject to wounding and intense archetypal reactions of which rage is the most common.

Another way to conceive of the difference, consistent with the notion that the Self represents the functional unity of the archetypes, is to see that while the specific content of the projection comes from mother, father, or the archetypes of anima or animus, the form or process of the interaction stems from the state of the Self. Thus, in our example, the kind of support the man required was similar to what he was accustomed to receiving from his mother. But the consequences of this support, or its lack, and the nature of his responses that followed, were determined by the state of the Self.

For this reason, analyses of *puer-puella* interactions in terms of the anima or animus, while accurate in content, are often ineffective in producing change. Before the specific projected fantasies can be dealt with, the process of the interaction has to be relieved of the pressure from the Self. Just as the anima or animus commonly needs to be dealt with

before the shadow, as is classically described in analyses of the *puer*, so must the Self be dealt with first. In effect, an individuation process in reverse is required, which repeats the developmental differentiation that has been disturbed.

As I mentioned earlier, the circumstances that precipitate *puer* development precede sexual differentiation and the formation of a strong identity based on gender. Some *puers* and *puellas* are, therefore, heterosexual, others are homosexual. A homosexual *puer* couple will suffer from the same problems in their relationship—sudden fragmentation, covert manipulation to maintain balance, and defensive rage and promiscuity—as a heterosexual couple, and the relationship can be worked on in the same way.

Because the incapacity to reflect oneself consistently is common to *puers* of both sexual inclinations, a therapeutic approach which bluntly aims at changing the sexual orientation can add fuel to the destructive fire. The desire of some homosexuals to change *can* rest on the deeper lack of self-acceptance in general. The first step to change in such a case is actually to give up the desire to change in the first place. And, of course, this first step might turn out to be the last as well.

## *CONCLUSION*

We can now turn to the final question of this paper: what can we do about all this? I believe there is a concrete and practical approach that can be taken, it is an approach that can be used in day to day relationships, and in therapy as well.The *puer*-development is a consequence of the parental response to the constellating Self of the child. We can ask ourselves, now, why does the parent fail to recognize the twin needs of the child: for an acceptance of his grandeur and specialness, unrealistic though it may be, and for the moderate frustrations of reality, painful though these may be? The answer should be clear: the parent fails to understand this, cannot understand it, because he, like the husband or wife in our example, is, due to his own unresolved *puer* psychology, too reactive to his own inner states to recognize and respond to the child's Self.

The pattern of interaction in *puer-puella* dyads, a pattern that repeats, for each, the inappropriate childhood constellation, must be interfered with. The way to do this, in general, is to switch attention from the content of the interaction to the process.

Concretely, this means that the partners must avoid acting out the irritation, anger or rage that they are impelled to by the precipitating fragmentation of their own Self. Instead, they need to look inward and ask what feeling is arousing this anger? Generally, the remark that



triggers the irritation has had the effect of making one feel small, worthless, wounded. The response on the tip of the tongue is a response to this inner state, and not truly a response to the other person. The fact of the way one feels—small, worthless—can be simply and neutrally communicated, in a non-accusatory way.

The straightforward offering of feelings accomplishes a number of things. First, it is an act of intimacy, even when the feelings are negative. The fact that one is willing to expose his vulnerability to his partner reveals an attitude of trust which stops his further fragmentation. It is therefore an implicit form of the reflection he requires. Second, the fact that one is able to talk neutrally about pain he is experiencing means that there is a part—the part that observes and comments—which is outside the cycle of inflation and fragmentation. Third, one partner perceives the other thus relatively at ease with painful feelings, willing to accept them and not shattered as a result. He therefore experiences less of the implicit accusation that he is at fault for the partner's feelings,and is in this way further stabilized.

In general, the goal to be worked for in personal relationships, as in therapy, is the creation of a third point of view which is neither split off from the cycles of inflation and fragmentation, nor completely immersed in either the constellated or fragmented Self. This outside point of view is the nucleus around which a new identity, no longer dependent on the cycles of the Self, will be created. Thus:

1. Irritation, anger and rage can be seen as signs of a defensive position. Try to press through, introspectively, to the underlying emotion.

2. In this way, and through similar close observation of "highs," one may become accurately aware of the cycling of the sense of identity.

3. Typical kinds of events, small though they may be, trigger fragmentation or reconstellation. A common experience is to feel depressed or elated without knowing why. A careful examination of the previous days' events will turn up the barely noticeable cause.

4. Control can be exercised over the actions which each pole of the cycle impels one to, and in this way one may learn which actions are responses, direct or defensive, to the cycle of the childhood Self.

5. Avoid interpretation of the content of an interchange. By interpreting a statement, you deny its integrity. That is, if a person comes to feel that what he said is not what he thought, he infers that there are at least two unrelated parts to himself. Though this may be objectively true, the effect in the *puer* of being told so is to enhance fragmentation.

6. Avoid calling attention to parts of the personality by shifting the level of conversation to interpretation: "that's your hero," "that's just an animus opinion," "that's a critical parent," "that's the superego," can precipitate fragmentation if a neutral, observing point of view has not yet

been established. In a setting where rage is felt as inappropriate, for example at the beginning of analysis, the fragmentation will be covered up by a kind of blank-faced acceptance. Otherwise, the reaction will be anger or some other reactive archetypal identification. It is important to trace the sequence of events that led to this result whenever it occurs. The accuracy or inaccuracy of the interpretation, the content, is of less consequence in the *puer* than the process of the exchange and its effect on the Self.

Second, avoid reductive interpretations. These have a similar effect: "you need to cut your ties with your mother," "when are you going to grow up and face responsibility?" Because of the effect which such statements have, *puers* will often run out of a relationship in which this occurs. On the other hand, synthesis or amplification tends to feed the inflation. This can be valuable for a time, at the beginning, where it serves as a subtler form of reflection of the childhood Self. But it must give way, eventually, to an examination of the process going on between the two people, and an understanding of how amplification as a form of exchange affects the state of the Self. Excessive amplification can provoke the *senex* defense against the pressures of an overstimulated Self.

If the defenses of the self are worked through and the individual receives the appropriate reflection, the Self will reconstellate. Proper reflection means that the divine child is being accepted by another and so eventually by oneself. As a result of the ensuing frustration, also properly reflected, the Self will be modified in the fashion that didn't occur in childhood.

I have found at least three kinds of dreams that signal the reconstellation of the Self in *puer* and *puella*. The first are dreams directly of the divine child. Such figures are recognized in dreams by their defining characteristic, namely precociousness. Thus, common motifs are: the child gestates in a miraculously short time; the child is born already able to speak; the child matures amazingly quickly; the child is born with the face of an adult. Many Renaissance paintings of the Christ child portray just this precociousness.

The second sort are dreams of slowly rotating mandalas. Some instances are: a rotating circular stage (which also brings up the pressure to perform in some way and gain approval thereby); a rotating circle of lights; a group of dancers moving in a circle; concentric rotating wheels or spheres. When the constellation of the Self is overstimulated, the rotation becomes rapid and may spin dizzily out of control.

The third sort, and most impressive, are dreams or visions of the Great White Light. Let me give you one particularly clear example which ties together many of the motifs of this lecture.



A twenty-one year old man dreamt the following: *I am on a beach being initiated. For the initiation I must wear a coat of many colors, like Joseph's. I look out over the ocean and am awe-struck to see twelve dark figures walking towards me over the water. As they near the shore, a great white light dawns and I am overcome with emotion.*

The dream created an extremely vivid impression on him. The full numinosity of it stayed with him for days afterward and it marked the turning point in his analysis. While the grandeur of his Self definition required much further work, from this point on he possessed a deep and abiding sense of his inner worth, come what may.

His identification with Joseph is very significant. As part of the initiation he is marked as someone special, but also with a figure for whom the feeling of specialness is central.

You will recall that Joseph was his father's favorite, and received from him a special coat of many colors as a sign of this favor. Joseph had the following dream, which he then told his brothers:

> Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.
>
> And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou has dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

Thus, Joseph identified himself with the Self, and by telling this dream to his family, made an implicit demand that they react to him as they would to the Self. Not surprisingly his brothers, in a rage, packed him off to Egypt. And yet, perhaps just because of the tribulations which this identification resulted in, he indeed became someone quite special. We see, then, that the initiation which our dreamer underwent was an initiation into his own sense of specialness, and to the numinosity of the Self which produces this feeling.

If the approach I have outlined above is consistently pursued, a separation will occur between the cycles of the Self and the personal identity. Let me give you an example of how this can be represented in dreams.

An analysand who was a twenty-eight year old woman was a therapist in a local clinic and working for her Ph.D. in clinical psychology. Her presenting complaint was an inability to complete the work for her degree. A repeating childhood dream was that she was surrounded by a circle of deformed dwarfs. To escape, she took off in a rocket. Here is a representation of both the fragmented Self—the circle of deformed dwarfs—and the grandiose flight of the childhood Self. In suceeding discussions, the analysand became aware of the playoff between her fantasies of specialness and her feelings of being "squashed," as she put it. This insight was followed by a dream in which her mother

was circling the earth in a spaceship. She was attempting to have NASA arrange a rescue operation.

There a number of important motifs to this dream. First, we see a separation between her own figure and the part of herself that is in space. Second, the source of her difficulties was in her mother's excess emphasis on her specialness, which carried the covert message that she was not good enough—squashed. It is now, therefore, the mother who orbits the earth. This is both a representation of the internalized mother imago with whom she is no longer identical, and also an accurate representation of the mother's *puer* psychology. Third, the fantasy of grandeur represented by space flight is now carried by a neutral agency (NASA) with the dreamer attempting to use this agency for the rescue operation. In other words, the focus of identity has now shifted from the childhood Self to the therapeutic task of rescuing the mother. A new source of self-worth will be found in the more moderate ambition of success in therapy, and it is around this ambition that a new identity can be forged.

The analysand will now gain a heightened sense of value not directly from fantasies generated by the Self, but from successes in relating to the Self, that is, from a new form of introversion. As a consequence of this objective, observing introversion, a separation will slowly occur between the Self and the ego's identity. To put it another way, through the therapeutic actions of the ego, the sense of identity will be transferred from its dependency on the Self to success in a concrete task. To an extent, this separation parallels the course of normal, non-*puer* development, where, in late adolescence, the weight of the sense of identity is shifted from the Self to achievements in reality, while the core of identity remains as the hidden Self. But there are a number of critical differences.

1. The separation of personal identity from the fantasies of the Self occurs at a much later age in the transformed *puer* than in normal development. As a result, the constellation of the Self, its modification, and the therapeutic separation of identity from the Self all occur before the eyes of a sophisticated observing consciousness. These events are therefore consciously understood and can be treated objectively.

2. Not only is the Self more clearly realized and understood, but the conscious understanding of its nature, to a degree at least, means that the separation of personal identity from the Self is much greater than in normal development. Once you have truly seen and understood how the grandeur and specialness of your ambitions are generated by an autonomous aspect of the psyche, it is no longer possible to experience that grandeur and specialness quite so naively as does the person for whom these feelings are both unconscious and highly modified by reality.

3. I have actually presented two different processes of development, modification of the childhood Self and separation from it. It is *via* extraversion that the fantasies of the Self are brought out into the open and modified by reality. It is via introversion in a sophisticated consciousness that the fantasies are perceived objectively and personal identity is separated from them. The disturbance of introversion in the *puer's* childhood, therapeutically transformed, yields a greater than normal development of this objective introversion.



In brief, the successful therapeutic treatment of the *puer* does not yield a "normal" individual. It yields what might be called the "therapeutic personality." I mean this in two senses. First, that such a personality is the product of therapy, formal or informal; second, that such a personality can exert a therapeutic effect on its surroundings, either formally or informally.

I would like to speak briefly about this second point. The *puer*, as I've described him, is extremely vulnerable. This vulnerability may be hidden behind *senex* or archetypal defenses, but it is there. The events and comments from others that initiate a reconstellation of the childhood Self, or precipitate its fragmentation, are very small by the world's standards. What makes it so difficult to live with or treat the *puer* is therefore our focus. We see these precipitating events as the world does, and so we miss how they are experienced by the *puer*, the more so the more reactive we are to our own inner fluctuations.

The capacity to respond properly, to hear the inner in the other rather than the outer, to see how the minute is very large, to focus on form or process rather than content, to be responsive to the Self in another; and further, to not treat another's defensive responses as an attack on our own Self, but to see them for what they are; all this depends on those capacities peculiar to the transformed *puer*.

It is through a late and unusually developed introversion that it becomes possible to re-enter one's own experience of the constellating and fragmenting Self and so understand when and why it occurs in another, and, if the context is proper, to point this out. Only if one's own personal identity is no longer narcissistically dependent on the cycles of the Self is it possible to not meet an attack with a counterattack, but with an objective communication of feelings.

Many *puers* enter therapy seeking the Self. They get what they want, but not what they expected. What they had expected are the fruits of the tree of life: fame, greatness, spirituality, creativity and specialness; what they get is less this fruit than the transformed leaves where the small, everyday events, seen inwardly, each become an opportunity for healing.

We may ask, "do the cycles of the Self ever stop?" Or, asked another way, "is it ever possible to achieve a perfectly stable identity?" I believe the answer is "no."

Until now, I have spoken of the Self as an entity subject to reactive constellation and fragmentation. But the archetype at the core of the *puer*

and *puella* development is the Self as the divine child. The life-cycle of this archetype is not stable at all. The myths of the child-gods are most commonly the yearly celebrated cycles of birth, glorification, death by dismemberment and rebirth. Objective knowledge of the Self, and the separation of personal identity from it, means the perception of this cycle as it spontaneously enacts itself inwardly. The constellation of the Self and its fragmentation are thereby separated from outer precipitating events as well as from the observing ego. Neither the grandeur of the Self in constellation, nor the pain of the fragmented Self are entirely avoidable—indeed, this cycle seems to be the root source of all our motivation—but knowledge of the state of the Self can be used objectively as an instrument for understanding both ourselves and others.