Jungian Theory and Social Work Practice

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Table 2. Zero-order Correlations and standardized partial regression coefficients for attitudinal and demographic characteristics and attitudes toward social work.

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R = .551; R² = .30

Introduction

Carl Jung's contributions to psychology, psychotherapy, and social science have had little impact upon social work practice. Social Work Abstracts lists only one article where Jungian theory is utilized by social workers. McBroom has recently written an article "The Collective Unconscious as a Unifying Concept in Teaching Human Behavior Cross Culturally." If only two articles about Jungian psychology have appeared in the social work literature in the last twelve years it seems safe to assume either that the Jungian oriented social workers practice their Jung underground and fail to publish or that Jung remains anathema to the profession.

In part one of this article an attempt will be made to understand why social work has chosen to ignore Jung's teachings. The compatibility of Jungian and social work theory is the content of the second part of the paper. The paper proposes that the incorporation of Jungian theory into social work theory may inspire our future creative growth as a profession.

The Politics of Popularity

In one of his more intimate interchanges with a colleague Freud spoke about his secret ambition to be more the writer than the psychotherapist. Freud utilizing the great German authors Lessing and Goethe as his literary models, was an excellent writer; Jung's writing was cumbersome and at times unintelligible. As Robert Bly the contemporary poet who is a Jungian put it, "Jung with all his greatness was not good with words. I am sorry about that. Anima and Animus are not very good
words to convey Jung's concepts." Partly because of his excellent writing skill Freud overshadowed Jung in the published polemics about their theoretical differences.

Jung became disreputable because of alleged support of the Nazi party during World War II.

In 1933 Jung took over the editorship of the Zentralblatt fur Psychotherapy. In his first editorial comment Jung stated: "That there are actual differences between Germanic and Semitic psychology has long been known to intelligent people. These differences are no longer going to be obliterated, which can only be to the advantage of science."6

To take a comment such as the preceding one out of context without understanding Jung as a human being does him a grave injustice. Jung believed that the psyche of each member of each ethnic group contained the collective unconscious mythology of the group. Within Jung's view Germanic and Semitic mythologies and cultures differ. Jung was utterly bewildered and taken aback by the storm that he had gathered about himself. He asked why it was in order for him to discuss differences in French and English psychology or Western and Chinese psychology without reprisal but could not do so about Jews. His disciples many of them Jews felt his remarks were truly innocent of any derogatory or malicious political intent.7

Unfortunately Jung also believed an ancient myth that a great Reich would rise in Germany. He was too slow to recognize that the government of Adolph Hitler was not the fulfillment of this myth.8

Circumstantial evidence was gathered by some Freudians as ammunition for their theoretical battle with the Jungians designed to associate Jung with the Reichsfuhrer of the Nazi Psychotherapy Society. Appearing simultaneously to Jung's editorial statement in the Zentralblatt mentioned above was Reichsfuhrer's Professor Dr. M. H. Goring's statement to the Nazi chapter," the society assumes of all members who are active as writers or speakers that they have worked through in all scientific earnest Adolph Hitler's fundamental work "Mein Kampf"
and that they acknowledge it as the basis of their work." It is ironic that Jung's contact with Dr. M. H. Goring, a cousin of the notorious Hermann Goring, was for the purpose of protecting his Jewish colleagues in Germany and to provide them with some international status if expelled from Germany.

Our retrospective knowledge about Jung as a humanitarian makes it inconceivable that he would support the Nazi butchers. Jung's theory acknowledges the imperfection of man, human fallibility. Jung confessed his own errors about the Nazis. Just as Jung accepted the shadow behavior of his clients and thus cured them, let us try to understand and forgive Jung for his self acknowledged errors. Jung's optimistic clinical bent made him slow to condemn the Nazis. He had an optimistic hope that the Nazis were capable of relinquishing their madness. He confesses in a letter dated April 20, 1946 that he had illusions about people when it came to Nazism. Jung confessed to the gallant Rabbi Leo Baeck: "I slipped up." (on the slippery grounds of politics.) Jung's mistake according to Jaffe (and in his own opinion after the event) lay in talking too much. Jaffe emphasizes the fact that Jung was too optimistic and goes on to say, "which proves once again the truism that a great scientist is not necessarily a good politician." When Rabbi Baeck heard Jung's side of the story at a meeting they had in Zurich immediately after the war Rabbi Baeck became completely reconciled to Jung and announced this fact publicly. After meeting the Nazi leaders Jung recognized that they were indeed madmen. To repeat Jung regretted that he was slow to recognize the Nazi barbarity and slow to declare his anti-Nazism.

Jung's reputation and influence in America in the 1930's, 1940's and post war years suffered tremendously given the anti-fascist and political climate of this era. Of equal importance two aspects of the content Jung's theory had to await their time for acceptance. Jung reintroduces the feminine principle and the God complex for the achievement of psychological wholeness. Both concepts found infertile ground to take root and flourish in a social cultural climate subsumed by predominantly patriarchal and scientific world views.
The aforementioned aspects of Jung's theory made him unpopular and yet this paper proposes that it is precisely these concepts that currently have relevance for social work practice. The feminine principle and the God complex therefore can serve as logical transitions into the second part of this paper where they will be more fully discussed.


For social workers displeased with labelling persons within diagnostic categories Jung offers the notion of wholeness as opposed to pathology. Each of us, says Jung, achieves wholeness by integrating our persona and shadow. The persona is our mask to the world: how we choose to appear to others and how we choose to integrate ourselves into society via our social roles. Perlman's Personalhook immediately offers congruence between Jungian and social work theory. In her text Perlman emphasizes assisting the persons we work with to develop their work and love roles ipso facto to develop a strong persona.

In contrast, the shadow contains aspects of ourselves equivalent to what Harry Stack Sullivan would call "not me." Robert Bly's imagery about it can assist our understanding of the shadow:

We come into the world with three hundred sixty degrees of personality, a full circle. Then imagine a little black bag next to you place all the aspects of yourself that your parents, teachers, and other significant persons train you to disown. If you are a man you may put your appropriate rage, your tenderness into the black bag. If you're a woman you may put your aggressive scientific propensities into the black bag. Before long the man's personality can be represented by a piece of the circle so big $\Delta$; the woman's personality can be represented by a piece of circle so big $\Delta$. Essential aspects of both their personalities are placed into the black bag, are lost in the shadow. Most of us spend
eighteen years of our lives burying parts of ourselves into the shadow and spend the next fifty years trying to recover them. In the process of each spouse rediscovering his or her shadow, a marital pair may spend hundreds of hours finding out who they really are and if they really belong together.

Note the dialectic structure of Jung's concepts. The self is the integration of the unity of opposites namely the persona and shadow.

More important for our discussion Freud and many of his followers viewed the shadow as the sick part of ourselves. Jung says it is only when we try to live out our shadow that we may get into difficulty with our society. Viewing one’s shadow nonpejoratively as an unconscious undeveloped part of oneself is subtly yet significantly different than disowning the shadow as a sick part of oneself. When we counteract the depletion of our energy required to guard against our erroneous fears of the shadow's energy, when we incorporate the energy available from the shadow into our self system, we rediscover our naturally curious, lustful, vital selves and become free to explore, love, and creatively engage our world. Robert Bly\(^1\) describes his incorporation of his shadow's

I am fifty years old and I feel more alive now than when I was younger. When you accept your shadow when you no longer guard against its energy your depression lifts.

Bly goes on to describe Jung's capacity to laugh from the depths of his being, an exemplar of what occurs when one no longer fears and accepts his own shadow.

Freud's concept of the id sounds similar to Jung's concept of the shadow. The subtle difference between the two are profound. To repeat for emphasis, to Freud the shadow equivalent of the id was to be defended against through isolation, repression, denial, and other mechanisms of defense. Freud's concept of sublimation, the capacity
of the ego to incorporate id impulses and divert them into higher social acts comes closest to Jung's view about the shadow. Adler\textsuperscript{19} sums up the major difference in Freud and Jung's major emphases. Adler speaks of Freud's thrust as causative--reductive vs. Jung's thrust as synthetic creative. Freud interpreted many aspects of psychological phenomena as being "nothing but"\textsuperscript{20} something that could be reduced to a lower level phenomena. Freud reduced much of dysfunctional psychological phenomena to the negative id which he viewed as the sewer of our sexual and aggressive drives. In contrast Jung views the unconscious, inclusive of its shadow as an a priori source of our essence, of our life's task and our creative energy. A cursory understanding of Jungian theory may have already alerted the reader to the practice implications of a theory where the major thrust is to understand what a client's communications portend when contrasted with a theory where the major thrust is to understand what a client's communications tell us about his past.

Jung's theory of personality types offers another source for achieving wholeness of self. The theory of personality types has the potential to offer us another method for assessing therapist client compatibility. In addition personality type theory has the potential to assist us in the understanding of marital incompatibility and marital compatibility.

Jung hypothesizes that the ego, the "little light" which helps us adapt to our environment attempts this adaptation by means of four basic forms of psychic activity or major functions. Von Franz\textsuperscript{21} succinctly describes these as follows:

1. The sensation function which consciously registers inner and outer facts, irrationally;
2. the thinking function by means of which our conscious ego establishes a rational (that is in accord with reason in general), logical order among objects;
3. the feeling function, which rationally establishes or, alternatively "selects" hierarchies of value (this is more pleasant,
more important, etc. than that);

4. The intuitive function which like sensation is irrational, which appears to be a
kind of perception via the unconscious and which seems to be mainly concerned with the
future possibilities of what is at hand.
(Intuition is not identical with fantasy which
Jung regards as a human capacity independent
of the functions, just as will is.)

Jung also hypothesizes that each of us in our
development cultivates and differentiates one function
more than the others and tends to overdevelop this function for his adaptation. Undergirding the four functions
is Jung's more basic dichotomy of introversion--extraversion. These can be defined in short hand manner by using
David Riesman's terms of inner and outer directness, respectively. The underdeveloped functions Jung calls
our inferior functions. This is not to say for example
that sensation is inferior to thinking or to say that
extraversion is more desirable than introversion. In
fact we often project both our needs and deficits upon
other persons. Opposites may attract and marry or may not
be able to endure one another. A client will often pro-
ject his poorly developed functions upon the therapist,
a source of transference. The fit between client and
therapist, the attraction and repulsion, or both of
marital partners can be explained by Jung's personality
typology.

Again helping clients achieve their wholeness
and ipso facto more adequate social adaptations may
require that we be alert to their undeveloped functions.

It is of interest to this writer who was both
a member of a settlement house and received his basic
professional training in settlement houses how Jungian
theory was put into practice without recognizing it as
such. Much of social work with groups described by Wilson
and Ryland can be reconceptualized as utilizing program
(e.g. drama, dances, crafts, games) as methods for helping
clients get in touch with and develop both their superior
and inferior functions. Part of the therapeutic impact
of the settlement may have been to assist clients to
become aware of and integrate their shadows. As we change partners in a square dance each of our partners becomes the mirror of a projected shadow or personality type aspect of ourselves.

To summarize, Jung's concept of wholeness honors social work's commitment to the client's strengths rather than weaknesses. The shadow and undeveloped aspects of one's personality require development rather than denunciation.

Jung regards society as a superordinate to the individual, another arena of compatibility between his and our profession's perspectives. It was probably because of his own need to partialize, to work out his own arena of cognitive mastery that Jung chose to focus upon the psyche simultaneously recognizing the superordinate a priori importance of society. It is surprising to discover that

".........Jung is interested primarily in the individual; but from the larger perspective of the study of man he regards society as the prior fact. Society and the social experiences of history are ultimately the main suppliers of the individual psyche. It comes about then that while his primary focus is on the individual personality, the conception of individuality is not a given fact for him but only a derivative of the more fundamental category of society."24

Similar to Mead's view, Jung sees society as strongest and most vital when the individuals within it can express the archetypes of their collective unconscious in the symbols of their particular society.25 Social Work's social action orientation when viewed from a Jungian perspective requires changing our society and its concomitant symbols so through these symbols each of the persons we work with can express the meaning of his or her life.

Another major contribution of Jung related to discovering our wholeness is the integration of both
our masculinity and femininity. Here again a subtlety distinguishes Jung and Freud. This subtlety has major implications for the understanding of mental anguish and its alleviation.

Freud's patriarchy tends to devalue the feminine as lesser, at times pathological. Similar to disowning the shadow it is preferable for men to disown their femininity and for women to disown their masculinity. Through his anima-animus concepts, the feminine essence in man and the masculine essence in women, Jung postulates that becoming a whole person requires that we accept and integrate the opposite sex within us. Time and space prevent a full discussion about the role of the aforementioned integration in the enrichment of our creativity and selfhood. The reader is encouraged to read June Singer's "Boundaries of the Soul" for a fuller exposition. It is more comforting and more therapeutically helpful to persons to perceive and accept their inner opposite sex attitudes and feelings as part of their wholeness rather than as homosexual, or sick, or both.

The religiousness of Jung's theory, theretofore viewed pejoratively, has the potential for being the source of our inner personal and professional spiritual renewal. "All the powers of creation are in us and we are in them" says Tillich. We have looked to our extraverted empiricism to help us find how we can best serve the persons who consult us with their difficulties. "Mighty casework has struck out," extraverted empiricism has thrown back into our faces. Jung would support logical positivist research. He prided himself for repudiating either-or positions in favor of both-and positions. Perhaps the time has come to accelerate looking inward to the collective unconscious, to the objective reality within, for practice principles. Many of our social work theoreticians imply, if not explicitly state, their belief that we possess an innate autonomous a priori self whose dictates are equal to social and cultural inputs to personality development. We accept many of Freud's teaching but find it difficult to accept that it was Freud who first conceptualized the collective unconscious. It is Jung who brings the concept to the collective unconscious to its logical conclusion.
The God complex, says Jung, is an empirical cross cultural reality. Disbelief in the sacred is partially a by product of belief in logical positivist scientific method. Scientific method itself has become religion. At its worst scientific method devoid of the feeling function of the ego led to the Nazi holocaust. At its best many top ranking creative scientists talk about their more spiritual hunches which lead them to discovery. Robert Jastrow founder and director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, a theoretical physicist and astronomer with high credentials expresses the aforementioned point in the following manner:

".......it is impossible to ever find by scientific reasoning what the creative force or the prime mover of the energy was that brought this universe of ours into being...."So the scientists have painted themselves into a corner by proving by their own methods that there are forces at work in this world---and you can call them God or the forces of physics---that are forever beyond the reach of scientific inquiry. And that's just mind blowing to me. This a point of contact between science and religious thinking that goes beyond the superficial resemblance of the flash of light to a few passages in the Bible."

Whether one's faith rests in Spinoza's pantheism---God or nature take your pick,---Darwin's natural selection, or the Deity, it is this author's belief that the self exists a priori, be it caused by laws of nature, inherited mutations, or a God given essence one can choose to reject or fulfill. This author also agrees with Jung's view that the psyche is the product of the impact of external natural and social phenomena upon a pre-formed human essence. Jung re-affirms the necessity for re-exploring and re-discovering our inner essence. While Freud helped us to look within to discover how our personal unconscious, our early experiences with the significant others in our lives, can trip us up or be a source of inspiration, Jung's collective unconscious, containing the wisdom of eternity, may also be an objective source of our creative
inspiration and creative growth.

The imagery of two social work examples may help the reader make contact with Jung's ideas. Imagine the brutalized child moving into adolescence and adulthood searching within for his or her sexual identity if he or she has grown up in a predominantly single sex correctional facility, or in a single parent family. Kagan states that such children may have encountered significant others who can serve as role models for healthy development. In some circumstances the personal environments of such children are so poor that it is difficult to convincingly explain the individual's source of inner strength by significant persons in his or her social environment. This writer's clinical experience has forced him to face the possibility that the individual's inner capacity to grow may reside in the person's ability to make contact with the anima-animus and archetypes of his or her collective unconscious. The person battered as a child, the person deprived of an opposite or same sex role model may be helped to make contact with the archetype of the wise old man or the great mother within the a priori collective unconscious of his or her psyche. This inner imago, in addition to external role models, perhaps even instead of external role models, may indeed be the source of the person's growth.

Conclusion

To paraphrase Bellow's restatement of Spinoza's philosophy in "Humboldt's Gift," once you grant a flying stone consciousness you've granted it free will. Jung's belief that spirit is granted to us a priori in the collective unconscious deserves a hearing. Consistent with Jung's "both and" position perhaps we have swung the pendulum as far as it can go in the direction of extraverted logical positivism. Perhaps it is time we mine introverted phenomenology for the truths within ourselves as both persons and healers. Perhaps it is time we help the persons we work with mine the truths within themselves. These explorations may be the arena of the future growth of the profession. Since this paper belongs to Jung let me allow him to speak for himself about having an open
mind so his ideas can be given a receptive hearing:

I was often amazed to the point of despair at the presumption of the organized knowledge and discipline of my day and their common attitude of all knowingness which I encountered everywhere among men in command of religious, scientific, and philosophic heights. I was enraged by their lack of just ordinary, natural, healthy curiosity in what they did not know and their instant dismissal as irrelevant, superstitious, or mystical rubbish of what seemed to me pointers towards increased knowledge and new areas for investigation.

Jung says that there is something above and beyond ourselves yet present within ourselves which if ignored can cause us psychic distress. Freud looked to Jung as his logical successor. Jung refused to lose his identity by becoming a symbiotic non-individuated shadow of Freud. It is this writer's opinion that Freud, as in many circumstances is again proven eminently correct, in part if not in toto. In this writer's view Jung has picked up Freud's torch and has brought many of his mentor's and beloved collaborators pioneer explorations to their next stages of development. One is advised to be open to the possibility that Jung's ideas are the transitions between our current and a higher stage of consciousness.

In this paper I have endeavored to explain why Jung was repudiated. McBroom points out that Maddi was forced to include Jung in his book about systems of psychotherapy because of student pressure. I have also attempted to demonstrate that Jung's views about the preeminent role and importance of society, his views about wholeness rather than pathology or patriarchal perfection, his views about integrating one's masculinity and femininity rather than viewing the opposite sex within us as sick, and his faith in the unconscious are all part of and compatible with social work practice and values. We have been open to many perspectives. Let us be open to a view that attempts to put us in touch with the spirit within us. Let us allow Jung's noble spirit to enrich our profession.
Footnotes


8. Ibid. p. 194.

9. Reich, op. cit.

10. van der Post, op. cit. p. 196.


15. van der Post op. cit, p. 196.

Bly, *op. cit.*

Ibid.


van der Post, *op. cit.* p. 142.


Progooff, *op. cit.*


31 Adler, op. cit.


35 Van der Post, op. cit. p. 102.

36 McBroom, op. cit.