From C.G. Jung, C.G. Jung Speaking

THE "FACE TO FACE" INTERVIEW

John Freeman's interview with Jung on the BBC television program "Face to Face" has undoubtedly brought Jung to more people than any other piece of journalism and any of Jung's own writings. Freeman and a team led by the producer Hugh Burnett filmed the interview in Jung's house at Küsnacht in March 1959, and, edited to one-half hour, it was broadcast in Great Britain on October 22, 1959. Subsequently, it has often been rebroadcast, and a cinema film version is frequently shown by educational organizations, Jungian groups, and such. Part of the transcript was published in a different form in *Face to Face*, edited by Burnett (London, 1964), containing a number of interviews conducted by Freeman.

Freeman was deputy editor of the *New Statesman* at the time of the interview with Jung. They formed a friendship that continued until Jung's death. Later, Freeman was editor-in-chief of the *New Statesman*; 1965–68, British High Commissioner to India; and 1969–71, British Ambassador to Washington.

Because of the success of Jung's interview by Freeman, the next year the BBC requested another interview, this time with a psychiatrist about medical problems. Jung declined, because he felt unequal to the exertion and was discouraged by his previous experience of interviews by psychologists poorly informed of his work. See his letter to Burnett, June 30, 1960, in *Letters*, ed. Adler, vol. 2.

Professor Jung, how many years have you lived in this lovely house by the lake at Zurich?

It's just about fifty years.

Do you live here now just with your secretaries and your English housekeeper?

Yes.

No children or grandchildren with you?

Oh no, they don't live here, but I have plenty of them in the surroundings.

Do they come to see you often?

Oh yes!

How many grandchildren have you?

Oh, nineteen.

And great grandchildren?

I think eight, and I suppose one is on the way.

And do you enjoy having them?

Well, it's nice to feel such a living crowd are out of oneself.

Are they afraid of you, do you think?

I don't think so. If you would know my grandchildren you wouldn't think so! They steal my things. Even my hat that belongs to me they stole the other day.

Now, can I take you back to your own childhood? Do you remember the occasion when you first felt consciousness of your own individual self?

That was in my eleventh year. There I suddenly was on my way to school I stepped out of a mist. It was just as if I had been in a mist, walking in a mist, and I stepped out of it and I knew, "I am." "I am what I am." And then I thought, "But what have I been before?" And then I found that I had been in a mist, not knowing how to differentiate my self from things. I was just one thing among other things.[1]

[1] Cf. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, pp. 32f./44f.

Now was that associated with any particular episode in your life, or was it just a normal function of adolescence?

Well, that's difficult to say. As far as I can remember, nothing had happened before that would explain this sudden coming to consciousness.

You hadn't, for instance, been quarrelling with your parents, or anything?

No. No.

What memories have you of your parents? Were they strict and old-fashioned in the way they brought you up?

Oh well, you know, they belonged to the later part of the Middle Ages. My father was a parson in the country, and you can imagine what people were then, you know, in the seventies of the past century. They had the convictions in which people have lived since one thousand eight hundred years.

How did he try to impress these convictions on you? Did he punish you, for instance?

Oh no, not at all, no. He was very liberal, and he was most tolerant and most understanding.

Which did you get on with more intimately—your father or your mother?

That's difficult to say. Of course, one is always more intimate with the mother, but when it comes to the personal feeling I had a better relation to my father, who was predictable, than with my mother, who was to me a very problematical something.

So at any rate fear was not an element in your relation with your father?

Not at all.

Did you accept him as being infallible in his judgments?

Oh no, I knew he was very fallible.

How old were you when you knew that?

Now, let me see. [Long pause.] Perhaps eleven or twelve years old. It was hanging together with the fact that I *was*, that I knew I *was*, and from then on I saw that my father was different.

Yes. So the moment of self-revelation was closely connected with realizing the fallibility of your parents?

Yes, one could say so. But I realized that I had fear of my mother, but not during the day. Then she was quite known to me, and predictable, but in the night I had fear of my mother.

And can you remember why? Can you remember what that fear—

I have not the slightest idea why.

What about your schooldays now? Were you happy at school—as a schoolboy?

In the beginning I was very happy to have companions, you know, because before I had been very lonely. We lived in the country and I had no brother and no sister. My sister was born very much later, when I was nine years old, and so I was used to being alone, but I missed it—I missed company—and in school it was wonderful to have company. But soon—you know in a country school I was far ahead—and then I began to be bored.

What sort of religious upbringing did your father give you?

Oh, we were Swiss Reformed.

And did he make you attend church regularly?

Oh, well, that was quite natural. Everybody went to church on Sunday.

And did you believe in God?

Oh, yes.

Do you now believe in God?

Now? [Pause.] Difficult to answer. I *know*. I don't need to believe. I know.

Well now, turning to the next staging point in your life. What made you decide to become a doctor?

I really—originally—I wanted to be an archaeologist; Assyriology, Egyptology, or something of the sort. I hadn't the money; the study was too expensive. So my second love then belonged to nature, particularly zoology, and when I began my studies I inscribed in the so-called Philosophical Faculty Two—that means natural sciences. But then I soon saw that the career that was before me would make a schoolmaster of me, you see. But I didn't—I never thought I had any chance to get any further, because we had no money at all. And then I saw that that didn't suit my expectations, you know. I didn't want to become a schoolmaster. Teaching was not just what I was looking for. And so I remembered that my grandfather had been a doctor, and I knew that when I was studying medicine I had a chance to study natural science and to become a doctor. And a doctor can develop, you see, he can have a practice, he can choose his scientific interests more or less. At all events, I would have more chance than being a schoolmaster, also the idea of doing something useful with human beings appealed to me.

And did you, when you decided to become a doctor, have difficulty in getting the training at school and in passing the exams?

I particularly had a difficulty with certain teachers. They didn't believe that I could write a thesis. I remember one case where the teacher had the custom, the habit, of discussing the papers written by the pupils, and he took the best first. And he went through the whole number of the pupils and I didn't appear, and I was badly troubled over it, and I thought well, it is impossible that my thesis can be *that*

bad, and when he had finished he said: "There is still one paper left over and that is the one by Jung. That would be by far the best paper if it hadn't been copied. He has just copied this somewhere—stolen. You are a thief, Jung! And if I knew where you had stolen it I would fling you out of school!" And I got mad and said this is the one thesis where I have worked the most, because the theme was interesting, in contradistinction, you know, to other themes which are not at all interesting to me. And then he said, "You are a liar, and if we can prove that you have stolen that thing somewhere, then you get out of school."[2]

Now that was a very serious thing for me, because what else then, you see? And I hated that fellow, and that was the only man I could have killed, you know, if I had met him once at a dark corner! I would have shown him something of what I could do.

Did you often have violent thoughts about people when you were young?

No, not exactly. Only when I got mad. Well, then I beat them up.

And did you often get mad?

Not so often, but then for good!

You were very strong and big, I imagine?

Yes, I was pretty strong, and you know, reared in the country with those peasant boys, it was a rough kind of life. I would have been capable of violence, I know. I was a bit afraid of it, so I rather tried to avoid critical situations because I didn't trust myself. Once I was attacked by about seven boys and I got mad, and I took one, and just swang him round by his legs, you know, and beat down four of them, and then they were satisfied.

And were there any consequences from that afterwards?

Oh, I should say, yes! From then on it was always sus-

[2] Ibid., pp. 64ff./72ff. Also "The Gifted Child," CW 17, par. 232.

pected that I was at the bottom of every trouble. I was not, but they were afraid and I was never attacked again.

Well now, when the time came that you qualified as a doctor, what made you decide to specialize in being an alienist?

Well, that is rather an interesting point. When I had finished my studies practically, and when I didn't know what I really wanted to do, I had a big chance to follow one of my professors. He was called to a new position in Munich, and he wanted me as his assistant. But then in that moment I studied for my final examination, I came across a textbook of psychiatry. Up to then I thought nothing about it, because our professor then wasn't particularly interested, and I only read the introduction to that book, where certain things were said about psychosis as a maladjustment of the personality. That hit the nail on the head. In that moment I saw I must become an alienist. My heart was thumping wildly in that moment, and when I told my professor I wouldn't follow him, I would study psychiatry, he couldn't understand it. Nor my friends, because in those days psychiatry was nothing, nothing at all. But I saw the one great chance to unite certain contrasting things in myself, namely, besides medicine—besides natural science I always had studied the history of philosophy and such subjects. It was just as if suddenly two streams were joining.[3]

And how long was it after you took that decision that you first came in contact with Freud?

Oh, you know, that was at the end of my studies, and then it took quite a while until I met Freud. You see, I'd finished my studies in 1900 and I met Freud altogether much later. In 1900 I already read his *Dream Interpretation* and the Breuer-Freud studies about hysteria, but that was merely literary, you know, and then in 1907 I became acquainted with him personally.

[3] *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, pp. 108f./111.

Will you tell me how that happened? Did you go to Vienna to meet him?

Oh well, then I'd written a book about the psychology of dementia praecox,[4] as we called schizophrenia then. And I sent him that book, and thus became acquainted. I went to Vienna for a fortnight and then we had a very long and penetrating conversation, and that settled it.

And this long and penetrating conversation was followed by personal friendship?

Oh yes, it soon developed into a personal friendship.

And what sort of man was Freud?

Well, he was a complicated nature, you know. I liked him very much, but I soon discovered that when he had thought something then it was settled, while I was doubting all along the line, and it was impossible to discuss something really *à fond*. You know he had no philosophical education, particularly; you see I was studying Kant, and I was steeped in it, and that was far from Freud. So from the very beginning there was a discrepancy.[5]

Did you in fact grow apart later, partly because of a difference in temperamental approach to experiment and proof and so on?

Well, of course, there is always a temperamental difference, and his approach was naturally different from mine because his personality was different from mine. That led me into my later investigation of psychological types. There are definite attitudes. Some people are doing it in this way and other people are doing it in another *typical* way, and there were such differences between myself and Freud, too.

Do you consider that Freud's standard of proof and experimentation was less high than your own?

[4] "The Psychology of Dementia Praecox," CW 3.

[5] For the meeting with Freud, see *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, ch. V, and *The Freud/Jung Letters*, p. 24.

Well, you see, that is an evaluation I'm not competent of; I am not my own history, or my historiographer. With reference to certain results, I think my method has its merits.

Tell me, did Freud himself ever analyze you?

Oh yes, I submitted quite a lot of my dreams to him, and so did he.

And he to you?

Yes, oh yes.

Do you remember now at this distance of time what were the significant features of Freud's dreams that you noted at the time?

Well, that is rather indiscreet to ask. You know I have—there is such a thing as a professional secret.

He's been dead these many years.

Yes, but these regards last longer than life. [Pause.] I prefer not to talk about it.

Well, may I ask you something else, then, which perhaps is also indiscreet. Is it true that you have a very large number of letters which you exchanged with Freud which are still unpublished?

Yes.

When are they going to be published?

Well, not during my lifetime.

You would have no objection to them being published after your lifetime?

Oh, no, none at all.

Because they are probably of great historical importance.

I don't think so.

Then why have you not published them so far?

Because they were not important enough to me. I see no particular importance in them.

They are concerned with personal matters?

Well, partially. But I wouldn't care to publish them.[6]

Well now, can we move on to the time when you did eventually part company with Freud. It was partly, I think, with the publication of your book Psychology of the Unconscious.[7] *Is that correct?*

That was the real cause. No, I mean the final cause, because it had a long preparation. You know, from the beginning I had a *reservatio mentalis.* I couldn't agree with quite a number of his ideas.

Which ones in particular?

Well, chiefly, his purely personal approach, and his disregard of the historical conditions of man. You see, we depend largely upon our history. We are shaped through education, through the influence of the parents, which is by no means always personal. They were prejudiced, or they were influenced by historical ideas or what are called dominants,[8] and that is a most decisive factor in psychology. We are not of today or of yesterday; we are of an immense age.

Was it not partly your observation, your clinical observation, of psychotic cases which led you to differ from Freud on this?

It was partially my experience with schizophrenic patients that led me to the idea of certain general historical conditions.

Is there any one case that you can now look back on and feel that perhaps it was the turning point of your thought?

[6] By agreement of the Freud and Jung families, the letters were published in 1974. For an account of the events leading up to publication, see *The Freud/Jung Letters*, introduction, especially pp. xix–xxxiv.

[7] *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (1912). Revised 1952 as *Symbole der Wandlung* = *Symbols of Transformation*, CW 5.

[8] Another term for archetypes.

Oh yes, I had quite a number of experiences of that sort, and I went even to Washington to study Negroes at the psychiatric clinic there,[9] in order to find out whether they have the same type of dreams as we have, and these experiences and others led me then to the hypothesis that there is an impersonal stratum in our psyche, and I can tell you an example. We had a patient in the ward; he was quiet but completely dissociated, a schizophrenic, and he was in the clinic or the ward twenty years. He had come into the clinic as a matter of fact a young man, a little clerk and with no particular education, and once I came into the ward and he was obviously excited and called to me, took me by the lapel of my coat, and led me to the window, and said: "Doctor! Now! Now you will see. Now look at it. Look up at the sun and see how it moves. See, you must move your head, too, like this, and then you will see the phallus of the sun, and you know, that's origin of the wind. And you see how the sun moves as you move your head, from one side to the other!" Of course, I did not understand it at all. I thought oh, there you are, he's just crazy. But that case remained in my mind, and four years later I came across a paper written by the German historian, Dieterich, who had dealt with the so-called Mithras Liturgy, a part of the Great Parisian Magic Papyrus. And there he produced part of the so-called Mithras Liturgy, namely it had said there: "After the second prayer you will see how the disc of the sun unfolds, and you will see hanging down from it the tube, the origin of the wind, and when you move your face to the regions of the east it will move there, and if you move your face to the regions of the west it will follow you." And instantly I knew—now this is it! This is the vision of my patient![10]

[9] At St. Elizabeths Hospital, Washington, D.C., September 1912. See *The Freud/Jung Letters*, 323J, n. 2.

[10] CW 5, pars. 150ff. Cf. also CW 8, pars. 228 and 318, and CW 9 i, par. 105.

But how could you be sure that your patient wasn't unconsciously recalling something that somebody had told him?

Oh, no. Quite out of the question, because that thing was not known. It was in a magic papyrus in Paris, and it wasn't even published. It was only published four years later,[11] after I had observed it with my patient.

And this you felt proved that there was an unconscious which was something more than personal?

Oh well, that was not a proof to me, but it was a hint, and I took the hint.

Now tell me, how did you first decide to start your work on the psychological types? Was that also as a result of some particular clinical experience?

Less so. It was a very personal reason, namely to do justice to the psychology of Freud, also to that of Adler, and to find my own bearings. That helped me to understand why Freud developed such a theory. Or why Adler developed his theory with his power principle.

Have you concluded what psychological type you are yourself?

Naturally I have devoted a great deal of attention to that painful question, you know!

And reached a conclusion?

Well, you see, the type is nothing static. It changes in the course of life, but I most certainly was characterized by thinking. I always thought, from early childhood on, and I had a great deal of intuition too. And I had a definite difficulty with feeling, and my relation to reality was not particularly brilliant. I was often at variance with the

[11] Albrecht Dieterich's *Eine Mithrasliturgie* actually was published first in the year 1903, before the delusion was observed. See "The Concept of the Collective Unconscious," CW 9 i, par. 105, n. 5.

reality of things. Now that gives you all the necessary data for a diagnosis!

During the nineteen thirties, when you were working a lot with German patients, you did, I believe, forecast that a second world war was very likely. Well now, looking at the world today, do you feel that a third world war is likely?

I have no definite indications in that respect, but there are so many indications that one doesn't know what one sees. Is it trees, or is it the wood? It's very difficult to say, because people's dreams contain apprehensions, you know, but it is very difficult to say whether they point to a war, because that idea is uppermost in people's minds. Formerly, you know, it has been much simpler. People didn't think of a war, and therefore it was rather clear what the dreams meant. Nowadays no more so. We are so full of apprehensions, fears, that one doesn't know exactly to what it points. One thing is sure. A great change of our psychological attitude is imminent. That is certain.

And why?

Because we need more—we need more psychology. We need more understanding of human nature, because the only real danger that exists is man himself. He is the great danger, and we are pitifully unaware of it. We know nothing of man, far too little. His psyche should be studied, because we are the origin of all coming evil.

Does man, do you think, need to have the concept of sin and evil to live with? Is this part of our nature?

Well, obviously.

And of a redeemer?

That is an inevitable consequence.

This is not a concept which will disappear as we become more rational; it's something which—

Well, I don't believe that man ever will deviate from the original pattern of his being. There will always be such

ideas. For instance, if you do not directly believe in a personal redeemer, as it was the case with Hitler, or the hero-worship in Russia, then it is an idea, it is a symbolic idea.

You have written, at one time and another, some sentences which have surprised me a little, about death. Now, in particular I remember you said that death is psychologically just as important as birth and like it it's an integral part of life. But surely it can't be like birth if it's an end, can it?

Yes, if it's an end, and there we are not quite certain about this end, because you know there are these peculiar faculties of the psyche, that it isn't entirely confined to space and time. You can have dreams or visions of the future, you can see around corners, and such things. Only ignorance denies these facts, you know; it's quite evident that they do exist, and have existed always. Now these facts show that the psyche, in part at least, is not dependent upon these confinements. And then what? When the psyche is not under that obligation to live in time and space alone, and obviously it doesn't, then to that extent the psyche is not subjected to those laws, and that means a practical continuation of life, of a sort of psychical existence beyond time and space.

Do you yourself believe that death is probably the end, or do you believe that—

Well, I can't say. You see, the word belief is a difficult thing for me. I don't believe. I must have a reason for a certain hypothesis. Either I know a thing, and then I know it—I don't need to believe it. I don't allow myself, for instance, to believe a thing just for the sake of believing it. I can't believe it. But when there are sufficient reasons for a certain hypothesis, I shall accept . . . naturally. I should say: "We had to reckon with the possibility of so and so"—you know.

Well now, you've told us that we should regard death as being a goal—

Yes.

—and that to shrink away from it is to evade life and make life purposeless.

Yes.

What advice would you give to people in their later life to enable them to do this, when most of them must in fact believe that death is the end of everything?

Well, you see, I have treated many old people, and it's quite interesting to watch what the unconscious is doing with the fact that it is apparently threatened with a complete end. It disregards it. Life behaves as if it were going on, and so I think it is better for an old person to live on, to look forward to the next day, as if he had to spend centuries, and then he lives properly. But when he is afraid, when he doesn't look forward, he looks back, he petrifies, he gets stiff and he dies before his time. But when he's living and looking forward to the great adventure that is ahead, then he lives, and that is about what the unconscious is intending to do. Of course, it's quite obvious that we're all going to die, and this is the sad finale of everything; but nevertheless, there is something in us that doesn't believe it apparently. But this is merely a fact, a psychological fact—it doesn't mean to me that it proves something. It simply is so. For instance, I may not know why we need salt, but we prefer to eat salt, because we feel better. And so when you think in a certain way you may feel considerably better, and I think if you think along the lines of nature then you think properly.

And this leads me to the last question that I want to ask you. As the world becomes more technically efficient it seems increasingly necessary for people to behave communally and collectively. Now do you think it possible that the

highest development of man may be to submerge his own individuality in a kind of collective consciousness?

That's hardly possible. I think there will be a reaction. A reaction will set in against this communal dissociation. You know, man doesn't stand for ever his nullification. Once there will be a reaction, and I see it setting in. You know, when I think of my patients, they all seek their own existence and to assure their existence against that complete atomization into nothingness, or into meaninglessness. Man cannot stand a meaningless life.