

"Care of the Soul in Troubled Times"  
Thomas Moore 2/16/20 Tucson, AZ  
Sponsored by AZ Friends of Jung

Notes by Carlton F. "Perk" Clark, LCSW [perk@psychod.com]

Thomas Moore (TM) has written Care of the Soul and 25 other books, pursued religious studies, psychology, Jung; James Hillman; is a psychologist; recent book: The Ageless Soul; the following notes are paraphrased from his speech in Tucson this February.

TM: Today [this speech and this assemblage] has a long and rich history: small groups have been talking about the soul since Plato, for 2000 years. In the 15<sup>th</sup> c. Florence, artists were influenced by the 'Florentine Academy,' the Platonic Academy. A very long tradition.

I read Jung constantly. Here is a part of a letter he wrote in 1959. He'd received a letter from a man in Tucson. "To Verner Breher," Jung writes: "your kind letter comes from a group of people... in remote places of the world... interested in my psychology. My books have a tolerable sale & are difficult to read - do not go down easily."... "There was a small echo" from my books, but I cannot complain re: the academic (acceptance?).... but doubt the impact of my books." (Aside: at Syracuse University TM was assigned to read the 18 volumes by Jung, 600 pages each, in one semester.)

TM: Jung goes on to complain that people don't read... suspects his ideas may be frightening... so maybe people are afraid of what Jung has to say. When I applied for a Fulbright, they told me Jung was 'crazy,' and denied the Fulbright. I hear things, that people fear Jung: 'If you live what is boiling inside you, not the life of people telling you what you should do....' he said. Jung writes from a very deep place.

Today we have a lot of anxiety, a scary world, people tell me: it's not a peaceful world, it is changing rapidly... these wonderful churches (in which he is now speaking) still exist -- there are places to go where we can get in touch with our inner life.

The world we live in does not cultivate this inner life: don't you have these desires? ... a different job? Places to go? It's very erotic - Eros means desire, period. We repress these things. Jung knew it's important to contact this.

Jung was a magus, a serious magician... knew the world is full of mystery and power... he (did that) and risked being seen as crazy. So what did he do? He writes of this in Memories, Dreams, Reflections. I read that in my 30's when Joyce Carol Oates told me it was the best autobiography ever written. In a chapter, "Confrontation with the Unconscious" written when he began to fall apart, he was a doctor in a hospital. He thought, 'when I was a child, age 11, I had these toys...' and he went and got those, played with those toy soldiers and blocks (between seeing patients). This is a magic approach - go DIRECTLY to those things, not to your therapist. He played with those things and he felt better.

And then he discovered a woman's voice was talking to him, giving him instructions. "It was the anima (Latin for soul) speaking to me in this anxious state." So he established a relationship with the anima, with soul. [Anima: Jung's term for the feminine part of a man's personality; the part of the psyche that is directed inward, and is in touch with the subconscious]

TM: You too can do this – we have these voices within us – this is not adjusting to everyone around you – the anxiety within you is a powerlessness.

Jung was writing in 1938 – he was in Switzerland and the Nazis were on the border, he didn't know if they would invade or not. He was not surrendering to the anxiety – he was reading alchemy. He thought it was the key to the soul. He was compelled to do that. He discovered alchemy in a dream: he was very attuned to and willing to follow his inner life. 'If you understand a dream, follow it through.' This is one risk after another.

So he engaged with anima, he discovered then animus whom he named Philemon – he then painted an image of Philemon, this is in the Redbook. These efforts put us in touch with the (soul) and this has a better, closer relationship with that power inside us.

+++++ Addition by Clark:  
Anima and animus - Wikipedia  
en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Anima\_and\_animus

The anima and **animus** are described in Carl **Jung's** school of analytical psychology as part of his theory of the collective unconscious. **Jung** described the **animus** as the unconscious masculine side of a woman, and the anima as the unconscious feminine side of a man, each transcending the personal psyche.  
+++++=

TM: If you are anxious some night, paint. I go do music then. You will some way get an image and relate it to that. ... Later Jung wanted to do more, so he built a home, a place, 'the tower.' He found a stone quarry and took lessons in stone cutting! You have to study if you want to learn magic! This was not aesthetics – these objects have power, much like the objects in the Native American traditions do.

These are ways to deal with your anxiety. We've created a world that is ignorant of our power. I believe late night comedians have some of this power – people SHOULD wonder about your sanity now and then! Plato understood this. "There are four ways to be crazy, a maniac: religion; love; clairvoyance (intuition) and one more: the creative act." So I am suggesting that to deal with our anxiety we should be in touch with our power.

Jung built his tower, he carved images and statements in that stone. So if he was your model, do what he did in your own way. What would YOU do in a Platonic sense: paint? Build? Travel?

Jung was interested in food, and cooking – that is a kind of alchemy – take some lessons in cooking and do it! It can help you in relations with your family. (Example: a client called her estranged mother about how to make a soup; another example: 'I'm depressed, can't be helped, I miss the food in the South. The client was told to go make that food – he did -- his depression was gone.

In contemporary society we are out of touch with things that make us human. You don't "think" your way out of this: you have to find a way to the soul in you.

Here is an example: sadomasochism. I have a tiny story first. I began doing therapy about age 35. I felt a lot of confidence from all my studies but was never comfortable dealing with aggressive patients. One asked me, where should I put my gun?

So I asked a friend Rafael Lopez Pedraza, a therapist. He and Hillman and I and our wives were walking down the street. I told him my problem of dealing with aggression and he suddenly shoved me into this alley we were passing. He said, "sada," and his wife said he was telling me to read Marque de Sade. They are terrible novels but really educated me. I believe de Sade was trying to understand how it is that people could be so dark. So I wrote Dark Eros.

You can see the values crumbling everywhere in the world. Your anxiety is a form of masochism. Powerlessness is a part of that anxiety. I'm telling you about finding your way, finding your power in crazy or artistic ways – get to know these little figures, not your ego, they are other than you. It might seem like a crazy thing to do, to get in touch with your eccentricity (also known as 'individuation'). Eccentric means 'outside the circle.' The scientific way is not the only way to understand the world – but we think it makes sense to sit in a doctor's waiting room! If you lived in another culture there'd be dreams and feathers and dancing!

I was in New Hampshire once, talking in a church. Aman told me his 13 yr old daughter had died, and what was he to do?? I told him we usually live in a circle where things are 'not to be done.' I told him he should (just go against that), step outside that circle... Jung did that. Who cares? This being yourself, having your power, and getting out of your anxiety.

Some of you here are taking guidance ... but I didn't want this to be a group -- I encourage you to have a community that can follow Jung, but I mean his spirit, not his theories.. You should first read Memories. He didn't talk about what he did, but what he felt.

Questions from the Audience:

1.(question could not be heard) TM: One of the things is learning to live 'vertically' – we live horizontally -- but we have a transcendence, we can go beyond ourselves. We still need faith hope & love to survive.

I think faith means in Greek pistis = trust. "Can you trust yourself?" Who you are, what you are about, wants to be expressed. Do you trust life? That is a transcendent virtue, not in some figure but in yourself. You want to live with hope.

I was speaking at a large conference and heard from a dying woman: all I could think of was "how can you trust in life to take care of me and my children?" It is a vertical life. ... Transcendence means a very big vision. I follow this Platonic vision. The spirit takes us up to a transcendent place. The soul takes us down into where you are and who you are.

Make sure your spirituality has a lot of soul in it – that moralizing, better-than attitude is some of the danger of the spiritual path. But soul means you are connected to people who are different than you. Keep spirit and soul together...

2. Question: What about psychedelics? TM: I'm just not a psychedelic guy ... I look at traditional people, all over the world they use psychedelics, including mushrooms, cited in the Gospels. I guess what they say is correct,

especially in a community, traditional. You need a container of some kind – and doughnuts can kill you too... A container is necessary and something beyond your own will power...

3. Question: 'you are making references to religions in India ??' TM: We have to be open to emptiness: shunyata [Clark: Buddhism: the doctrine that phenomena are devoid of an immutable or determinate intrinsic nature.] There are practices to do. We have to be empty in our practices – to not cling to the practices. Nicholas of Cusa said 'we think that we know everything but we don't.' We have to find ways for the mystery -- you have to speak in a way (?) to know we don't know what we are doing... [Clark: Suzuki Roshi, when asked about a footbridge he was building with others: 'what are you doing down there? Roshi: "we have no idea !!!" ]

4. Question: 'what about art?': TM: For Jung, making art was a way to connect with the thing [[Philemon](#)], finding a way to have an 'image well,' so that the spirit might come out and inhabit it. The painting was "a decoy" so that the passing spirit-angel will inhabit it.

5. Question, 'what about poetry?'. .... TM: This is not to express what you know – not reflecting what is – it is the realm of angels (meaning messengers). Angels, diamons... poetry is a part of that. The words are decoys. In reading poetry you get in touch with your power. In England and Ireland someone bursts into a poem or a song. There is much power in poetry. I may spend two hours tracing one word's use over time. James Hillman writes about this. Do this yourself. It is not you who writes a poem, it's a muse. William Blake: 'we are the secretaries; the author is eternity'\_

6. Question:... soul & spirit & the tree of life and the repairing of the world... TM: how do spirit & soul relate to the anima mundi?

+++++

Clark: Wikipedia: The **world soul** ([Greek](#): ψυχὴ κόσμου *psuchè kósmou*, [Latin](#): *anima mundi*) is, according to several systems of thought, an intrinsic connection between all living things on the planet, which relates to the world in much the same way as the soul is connected to the human body. [Plato](#) adhered to this idea and it was an important component of most [Neoplatonic](#) systems.

+++++

TM: We have this image of a tree with roots – a good image for soul & spirit. Spirit takes us upward. In the gothic cathedrals you can see this, looking upward to the sky itself... The study of clouds and what goes on in the clouds... what goes on in the sky, this is to be big, to have a big vision of spirit (see [A Religion of One's Own](#)).

But all that spirit makes us other-worldly – the soul makes us human. The spirit can be dangerous (see religious wars). My problem with environmentalism is that it becomes moralistic: we need a soul-based environmental movement... Soul and spirit need to be connected. Church should help us get in touch with the deep mysteries, not just with how to behave. Spirit is full of magic. We need both soul and spirit.

6. Question: 'what about the "dark eros" you wrote about in the Madness of the Divine? TM: This was written for therapists who deal with the tough side of life and about Marqee de Sade. My feeling is much like Jung's – 'God has

to have come connection with the devil – evil & goodness are connected – to be a good person is to discover your own capacity for evil.

There is a defensive goodness (“I don’t have a shadow”). So you have to discover your own darkness – we can be human and divine at the same time. You have to acknowledge your capacity for evil – churches think you have to deny all your shadow. This is hell already -- it is a world of shadow and light...

7. Question: (about the shadow?) TM: Jung does explore this idea repeatedly. We are talking about not acting out shadow – thieves (do that) – we are talking about being shadow. We are innocent in a way. In America we have a problem with innocence – in much of the world we look at the young men going to war, we sentimentalize these military guys – it is quite dark actually. Your shadow could be involved with making money: working for a dishonest illegal company? Your sexuality that drives what you do? To have soul & spirit together (is the idea).

TM: I have a habit of meeting with Harold Kushner (book: When Bad Things Happen to Good People). He feels that Judaism is more open to shadow than Christianity... there is peace found in incorporating the shadow

8. Question: “what about the role of ceremony & ritual?” TM: I published Rituals of the Imagination... ritual and river are from the same root word... the river is life... Ritual keeps you in the stream. There are actions like brushing your teeth, but the dream of brushing your teeth represents the poetry in ordinary tasks. Analysts spend hours on this ‘what compels you to brush your teeth?’

Anything we do can be a ritual – we are often doing things which have no practical value which speak to the soul... Go into a church... no practical value, there but tremendous value for the soul. We ritualize ordinary things (going to a restaurant on our anniversary) to honor and celebrate. This becomes food for the soul.

A lot of people eat aimlessly -- frozen dinners... Your soul needs something here. Try something different! It is how you feed your soul. Plato used the phrase “care for the soul” Look at these problems practically, metaphorically.

Dream analysis is about not taking it literally. Develop your metaphorical sense, think metaphorically; you may be living your dream... Tell yourself ‘tonight I am going to dream and I will remember part of my dream’. Don’t get up too fast, write the dream exactly as you remember it. Don’t revise it.

9: Question: what about story tellers? TM: Story is a form, just like painting. This takes it into the realm of the imagination. The ‘imaginal image’ is what you want. You want the story, the narrative. Story has a shadow. You can contaminate a story (which can be a defense against something) and the person may be deluding the therapist. You can’t trust stories all the time – you have to have an ear for this – and what about the countertransference? How are you reacting to the story?

10. Question: what about defensiveness? TM: So when is making soup a defense? Everything can be filled with motive to defend, or to impress. It is said that the higher is your purpose, the greater your shadow. Therapists can be most unconscious people, wasting time. How do I break the spell? The best way is to catch myself doing something stupid and then tell someone

[Clark: aka case consultation] ... little doses of suffering help us get strength.

Self-knowledge is painful, but avoiding all that effort is worse...

# # #