

Puella's Shadow

...I sit

Composed in Grecian tunic and psyche-knot,
Rooted to your black look, the play turned tragic:
Which such blight wrought on our bankrupt estate,
What ceremony of words can patch the havoc?

Conversation Among the Ruins by Sylvia Plath

Each of us harbors within our inner universe a number of characters, parts of ourselves that can cause conflict and mental distress when not understood. We are relatively unacquainted with these players and their roles and yet they are constantly seeking a stage on which to perform their tragedies and comedies both personally and collectively.

Puella is one of these characters but there is so much shadow around her that the term, Puella, is absent from Jung's Collected Works as noted by P. Harvey [personal communication, October, 2005]. Although Puella has been mentioned tangentially by Jungian theorists such as James Hillman, Marie Louise von Franz and Ester Harding she is usually addressed as the female Puer which relegates her to the shadows and insubstantial in her own right.

To give an idea of this archetype and in one of the numerous selections explaining the concept, Jung said, "An archetypal content

expresses itself, first and foremost, in metaphors...it is neither the one thing nor the other, but the unknown third thing that finds more or less adequate expression in all these similes, yet-to the perpetual vexation of the intellect-remains unknown and not to be fitted into a formula” [Jung, CW 9i par. 267.

The workings of the archetype within a person reveals the shadow functioning within an individual and at culture dimensions that Puella women bring into psychology consulting rooms today. Although the Puella character forms within the psyche in various ways, the perspective here focuses on the effect of the absent father and the absorbing mother who is emotionally distant. These are part of what contribute to the Puella figure without sufficient connection to her ground of being and simultaneously off in feminine and masculine aspects. The phenomenon described here also occurs in the psyches of men who likewise face issues of understanding and integrating their own Puella characteristics.

Puella is associated with the archetypal energy of the new moon, the Greek goddesses Artemis and Persephone and the young innocent maiden in fairy tales. She is part of the spectrum of the feminine extending into the full moon and the crone of aging. There is no room to go into these connections here except to acknowledge the archetypal expansion from youth to age and to

be mindful of honoring this, especially because by her very nature Puella does not. The Puella archetype can be further described as a woman who is fascinating, has a free and child-like vitality, lights up a room and performs for the adulation and praise from others. She does not like being restrained, enslaved to rules or convention, or stopped short in any way, mostly by reality. She appears as enchanting with freshness, indomitable energy, and a zest for the unusual. She embodies the desire for continual youth as well as the artistic and innovative. She believes in the naïve fantasy of an enchanting and paradisiacal world where she will be treated as a princess and ascend her out of daily life, which she considers common.

The problem is that all these lively qualities are limited by the shadow that she flees from, in both its light and dark aspects. In this sense the shadow represents a coming to earth that is necessary for actualizing her creativity and life, but which she turns from [von Franz 2000, p. 128]. A dark shadow of Puella manifests in narcissism and an anxiety arising from being in flight from herself, exhibiting various forms of self-avoidance and difficulty in taking seriously the full measure of her being. Her enlivening qualities are continually countered by deadening ones. This leaves her with an inability to act, have or create a future. The focus on impossibilities, the ‘if only’, turns time inside out, all seems unreal, and life a threat rather than a pleasure.

In compensation, she craves the world's applause, money and love, using these externals to avoid the deeper levels of the psyche. It is as if she is made of ivory--rigid, beautiful, clear, complex. Her carefully manicured and controlled social self reflects the strictly internalized standards as she is set on a rigorous course of achievement. Behind an eager mask to please howls a vortex of self-doubt, marked by feelings of uncertainty and based on her all-too-sharp understanding of her absence of power. She can be driven to goals and performance but equally succumbs to the cultural repression that stifles a natural flow of creativity. The inhibiting tendencies dissolve desire and she hates the feelings of impotence. When aggression turns inward, rather than accessed for overcoming the obstacles, a woman feels defective or that something is missing.

Parental complexes overwhelm the girl Puella and in general become either healthy or ill depending on how they are internalized and how the energy is used. When marking an unfinished area of the personality and originating from early trauma or emotional neglect, the complexes gain negative energy and split off, functioning autonomously and therefore unconsciously. She can only hold the image of a girl that adversely affects her intellectual confidence and promotes idealization of others and its accompanying self-hatred. Often she experiences depression and fear of life, the world and herself that arise from the

fragmentation occurring from within. Lacking an inner holding place, the trouble is giving birth to her self because she identifies as a girl, not as a woman. She feels unreal, depersonalized and without connection to her physical existence. Out of touch with her femininity, even though she may look the part, she does not find satisfaction in being a woman.

Puella colludes unconsciously with outer norms, and is an example of the generations of women who struggle to feel secure in their body, to be self-constructive with their energy and to manifest talents. Her personality is compromised due to the cultural veneration of women as desirable when young, making all women insufficient at any age. Never able to be young enough, thin enough, smart enough, she is caught in the personal and cultural pressures that promote a worship of the unattainable, unrealistic and unnatural ideals that contribute to the lack of mature female models in our society. Metaphorically, Puella falls into this problem by keeping her make-up on in one form or another, an attitude that keeps her untouchable and unseen. This contributes to her superficiality, inability to deepen to the well of her being and avoiding self-reflection and self-reliance. Even if she lives on the edge and is radical and seemingly outside societal norms, she tends to psychologically check back more than move forward.

Continuing in paradox, the Puella nature has a virginal quality,

representing a deep interiority and freedom from external contamination, an intactness of the psyche that protects what is immature and unripe [Hillman, 1989, p. 190]. On the one hand, this supports the kind of aloneness necessary for self-growth and creative reflection and, on the other, can be so enclosed within itself that there is no adequate engagement with the world and no recognition, ability or relationship outside of herself.

As we have seen Puella, like any archetypal figure contains a variety of qualities ranging from the conscious to the unconscious, the positive to the negative, the detrimental to the beneficial. In order to escape the darker side of the shadow she has flights of imagination, a grandiose nature that compensates for depression yet keeps her in an undifferentiated state. A defense against time and aging keeps her perpetually moving but not necessarily developing. The future cannot evolve when the present is continually erased. The same psychological routine, repeated daily, hedges against renewal.

Von Franz [2000, p. 38] speaks about the dropping the illusions as difficult when a person is pushed out of childhood too soon and crashes into reality, which is the case for Puella. It takes much patience and tact in analytic work because the unmasking of reality can be tricky due to the vulnerable and repressed spots she guards against having illuminated. An inauthentic pose and accommodation to outer demands protects the terrified and precarious self that

cannot face the world. A false self takes over resulting in a loss of natural instincts while the real self remains, walled off and starved in a state of non-communication. A false identity builds over the inadequate sense of self to protect her from anything that is upsetting to her mentally and carefully constructed world. An antidote lies in being able to descend into the depths of the shadow and abandon the false self for the real—something very difficult for Puella.

Puella is driven by desires to be seen, to be the best and loved by everyone, but not known intimately. The fantasy is of one day making it and becoming someone but she cannot get there because she flees from psychic reality [Hillman, 1989, p. 29]. There is always a 'but' preventing development or commitment when each situation is for the short term and relationships are with those caught in similar noncommittal modes. She becomes bored easily and life feels dammed up, as she lives in a bubble not knowing how severely she is unaware of herself. The inner system is blocked and connection between mind, body and soul non-existent. In flight from her body, she seeks the ethereal and lives in her head. At core she resists life, fades before the fruit ripens, becoming only possibility and promise, unable to carry her own meaning through to the end. By preferring the fantasy of perpetual youth this woman

avoids exploring her abilities in depth, gestating ideas to the end and, in the process splits off from her psychological realizations.

A sense of fraudulence as an adult, a basic confusion and the need to control create tension and dissatisfaction, all bolstered by persona adaptation. She exudes a crystalline or brittle quality, an aura of aloofness and stiff veneer behind which she exists in a lofty and untouchable domain from where the world is observed. Inordinately identified with the persona signals that she is susceptible to shadow formation and suggests that a significant part of her personality exists beneath the facade. She is vulnerable, a terrified child fenced off from the view of others. Physical existence is a trial and body feelings are denied, ignored or escaped in order to circumvent feeling.

This attitude results in a lack of engagement, restlessness, depersonalization and inability to inhabit the present. Puella feels undeserving of love, that it is not safe to trust those who offer love and love can be a painful emotion, as it will mean entering into the heart of the wounds. So, she stops and does not live through these experiences to the instinctual level. [von Franz, 2000. P.39] It is no surprise that the Puella type experiences an inner emptiness that adds to the outer craving for acceptance and adoration in order to get away from it. A passage from the Journal of Sylvia Plath [1982, p. 67] expresses this, “ You have had chances; you have not taken them, you are wallowing in

original sin; your limitations. You have lost all delight in life. You are becoming a neuter machine. You cannot love, even if you knew how to begin to love...You want to go home, back to the womb...You have forgotten the secret you knew, of being joyous, of laughing, of opening doors”.

The wounds of Puella arise from early losses, rejections and insufficient holding environments leaving behind the nagging feeling of being flawed. This keeps her moving and doing but not being or evolving. She enters analysis because; “ there is something [she] cannot forget, something [she] cannot stop telling [herself], often by [her] actions, about [her] life. And these dismaying repetitions...create the illusion of time having stopped” [Phillips, 1994, p. 15]. This previous passage describes the emotional arrest that keeps her behind glass, removed from her existence and the world. She sidesteps the dark aspects of the self, which are threatening to her fragile sense of identity [Schwartz-Salant, 1982, p.22]. Puella is a stage in the development of the feminine but when this is as far as it goes, a woman is continually fighting against the fulfillment of her natural development. The not good enough, perfectionistic and driven qualities are overrun with the demons. These can internally harass so excessively that she eventually just gives up.

The shadow exerts itself in the Puella woman who looks a part and functions well according to others, but she feels nothing is meaningful and

without meaning the experiences of her life are nothing [von Franz, 2000, p. 148]. To make sure neither she nor anyone else discovers this, she feigns confidence and composure and might even come across as exhibitionistic and grandiose, self-centered, even mean-spirited, narrowly ambitious and envious. This rude and cold facade can seem harsh because it conceals the lack of capacity for intimacy and reciprocity in relationships. Without a favorable image of herself, she has little basis for understanding others. She has trouble giving because she feels she has nothing worthwhile to give and is unable to take a step back and respond flexibly and adaptively to other people's behavior. In addition, she is so involved in her own strivings that she does not see anyone else.

Puella is an aspect of the psyche which needs love and attention yet she engages in deception to herself and others by putting on a performance and acting 'as-if' [Solomon, 2004, p. 639]. She rebels against the natural limitations and average states that come with being a person and is unable to satisfy the deep sense of loss and feelings of being unlovable. She experiences shame, smallness, vulnerability and fear, all based on not being good enough. The lack of basic trust and security leaves her chasing an ideal through cosmetics, body re-shaping, compulsive and negative self-thoughts and behaviors killing off desires and feelings and causing dissociation from self and others. This self-

absorption is actually a defense against intimacy and reflection, be it self to self or self to others.

Preserved in a state of suspended animation, Puella is not present for the moments or the hours of her life. Her personal history is quickly erased in anxious self-concern, absorbed in watching the scale, her hair, the wrinkles, and the imperfection of her work. How can she find her ground of being when this is the very thing she avoids? The self-denial renounces identity, eating her up from within and cutting off her feminine spirit from its innermost recesses. She endures an unending war between parts of the self--a war of internal voices which are sadistic, unrelenting, but which she obeys.

Many women today remark about these inner forces that interfere--the limitations based on the sexual stereotypes, social and family pressures, etc., attempting to crush their bid for selfhood. Here are some of the shadow voices interceding in the psyche of Puella. "I do not like the physical reality of getting older with my dry and wrinkly skin. I hate what I see in the mirror. I cannot accept the fact that I am who I am. My work is not good enough. I do not remember what I did, felt or thought yesterday." Even though it hurts, she returns to such negative self-images day after day, Without an accurate inner mirror, she assesses herself as either inferior or superior, an object fashioned for the adoration of others, the inside and outside worlds disparate and unrelated.

Such attitudes leave her caught by and limited to stereotypes that are not amenable to modulation--because she believes them.

The Puella character is not easy to pin down because elusiveness is reinforced as part of her charm. For years she hardly notices who or what she is, too preoccupied, floating through life with her head in the clouds. Daily she dresses a mannequin and in viewing herself she only selects a part, or the effect, or the image set for the occasion. In lacking a capacity or desire for realistic self-reflection her image is distorted by the inability to connect with her core. Age comes to her like a disaster, not a celebration. The whole process becomes one set up as barriers against self and other attachments and adds to feelings of estrangement.

A dark shadow envelopes her creativity and expressiveness that goes nowhere, yet this very shadow also contains the parts she needs for self-fruition. The problem is that when the potentiality of the psyche is not used it becomes perverted. [Leonard, 1983, p. 89] Wrapped in self-denial she cannot access her natural aggression and desires--two components necessary for self-knowledge, use of talents and development of intimacy. Needing approval from others drives her competitive nature but this is curbed by the attitude that she must not threaten or surpass them as she fears being hated or excluded. Therefore, competitive rivalry is deviously assembled and she diminishes herself by holding

back in one way or another. This perversely supports the cultural bias against women being healthily competitive and strong.

A hallmark of Puella is that she lives provisionally. As noted previously, she hides in the shadows of emotional distancing and disconnection, self-loathing and disavowal of self-expression. Although she is self-absorbed she needs others to reflect back to her and to witness her life. She wastes time thinking about the pounds she wants to lose and cannot sit still to focus on the book she wants to write and avoids and the thing she would do when she is ready at some amorphous moment—but always later.

Daddy's Girl

Typically, Puella is described as daddy's girl, one who is special in his eyes, who understands and gives to him. Father and daughter are emotionally attached through her serving his needs so she can get love. This father loves her when a child but as she gets older he detaches and she feels his absence, neglect or abuse. The father, by denying his daughter's essence, restricts her to a half-dead life while she remains bound to him. His unavailability entangles a daughter in overvaluing him and other males and denigrating femininity. His fathering and the nature of their bond, whether in overt or covert forms, affects her ability to love or express herself and brings about reactions ranging from melancholy to self-destruction. She may internalize a persecutory father figure,

develop a hostile inner world, feel rage or numbness, obstruct inspiration and arrest self-integration. Acquiring self-depleting patterns and behaviors, she grows more and more lost. In being father dominated the Puella woman cannot access the feminine and therefore cannot find who she is. This lack of anchor from within is reflected in the lack of a cultural balance for women between mind, body and soul.

Puella learns to remain helpless to the father and other masculine aspects personally, culturally and relationally. The daughter/father problem reaches to the intrapsychic depths and archetypal roots--to issues of self and culture wherein lie the complex aspects and the patriarchal biases that many daughters are raised on. For generations a daughter was regarded as the least important member in the family and suppressed. The daughter/father issues remained a dark terrain and their relationship relegated to the shadows. Cultural biases kept daughters docile and fathers untouched, as if they were not essential to their children's lives. In fact, a father wielded so much influence that a daughter did not question her role with him and instead projected her disappointments and difficulties onto her mother, in yet another diminishment to the feminine.

A daughter naturally goes through a stage of idealizing her father. But, if he stays ideal, for whatever reasons, a daughter cannot get a sense about the reality of either of them. By default, she falls into the male-defined ideal, a

woman who buys the myth of being an object of perpetual youth, docility and sexual allure. As such, she is a personification or reflection of the passive servant, an object helplessly absorbed into the other. She is distracted, delicate and terrified by a basic and fundamental displacement in not knowing or taking her place. All these reactions are experienced as if she is at a distance from the problem that may become so subtle and so awful that mostly her self underestimates the distressing ramifications. “The daughters of such fathers often arrive in analysis with a façade of self-sufficiency. They despair of earning their father’s attention except temporarily and unconsciously, often as a sexual object, and they are caught in having to defend themselves while trying to prove themselves equal and worthy of their father’s praise They split off their sensuousness, capture men and/or accomplishments, but feel no tenderness and little self-regard. They are focused forever on seeking the father’s blessing and personal attention” [Perera, 1981, p.66].

The Destructive Side of Puella

The many facets of a dark shadow father bond, a yearning and adulation for him are mixed with distance from her mother. The image of confrontation of the old self looking at the new, the double, the mirror images and the complex relationship between these two selves as, looking into the mirror reveals the possibility of demise.

The problem of forging a coherent self from the warring fragments of her psyche is typical of many Puella women. Again from the journal of Sylvia Plath, “Putting up pretty artificial statues. I can’t get outside myself. [Kukil, 2000, p. 314] “The Idea of a life gets in the way of my life.” [p. 315] “The day is an accusation.” [p. 470] “What I fear worst is failure, and this is stopping me from trying...” [p. 471] “Something freezes me from my reape spirit: is it fear of failure, fear of being vulnerable?” [p. 476] I fear for the meaning and purpose of my life” [p. 525].

The emotional distress in relation to both mother and father reveals the aspects of parental relationships that are detrimental for satisfying attachment to self and others. Marking an unfinished area of the personality and originating from early trauma or emotional neglect, negative parental complexes adversely affect a daughter’s confidence, promote idealization of others and destroy initiative while feeding an internalized cycle of self-hatred, oppression and revenge.

Part of the internal disconnection came from a father who was unapproachable, surrounded by silence. She develops a phantom relationship with her father epitomized by, “the power of the fathers: a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men—by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the

division of labor—determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male” [Rich, 1981, p. 57].

From the absence of her father a woman can develop a father complex that becomes like a demon holding her in its clutches. [Leonard, 1983, p. 88] Internally, she formed attachment not to the father who was missing but to the gap and the absence. In the paucity of what he left behind, the father cannot be reborn. There is no life in his world and vital energies are wasted trying to give him life. Enchantment with him constellates her petrification--an objectification producing disturbing psychological sensations.

His images inside her became a non-represented and unspoken figure from which she paradoxically drew information [Greene, 1979, p. 69]. His absence influenced the formation of destructive inner figures, similar to the Puella woman, as they grapple with the ordeals of feminine identity and estrangement, discordance and disunity. Like the Puella woman, the childhood paradise was too early destroyed and became like a crime against her. She deadened herself and her psyche due to the deadened object within [Bollas, 1995, p. 74]. Its detritus haunted her and, like the dark shadow side of Puella, she suffered symptoms of depression, depersonalization, despair, and anxiety and disturbed connection to self.

However, the psychological process canceling the dark shadow of the personal father's claim on a daughter's spirit, as well as the general patriarchal attitudes, requires the paradox of getting close to him. This is a dance between keeping an eye on him, being absorbed in him and incorporating the forces related to him, without being destroyed in the process.

Graphically detailing her distress, the daughter/father tale has individual and collective proportions. Her protests against this psychological situation are in part shaped by identifying with a father she can never understand, get close to and whom she accuses of wronging her. The devotion to him becomes a mindless form of depersonalization; a mechanism of despair which is the psychological fallout from his emotional distance.

Rebellion against personal and cultural constraints trying to slough off the old, ill-fitting roles and gain release from being the girl toy of the male. There has been and remains pain in her unending search for place, recognition and freedom that can also be interpreted as paralleling the cultural loss of direction for women and the cultural images of the blind adoration of women towards men. The castration enacted by the masculine results in women turning aggression against themselves and sacrificing the feminine, similar to Puella who stays psychologically young and virginal.

Her psychological journey will require her to attain power not by following the dream of marrying a prince and then denying herself, but through appropriating her own energy and position. The Puella woman shares the responsibility of not just sinking into the wrongly interpreted fairytale image of feminine passivity. This path is too unconscious and sidesteps dealing with the issues concerning the various choices of women and the constructive use of feminine with masculine energy. Otherwise, “she is sentenced to live her daughterhood as a father’s priestess, votary, bride and queen” [Kroll, 1976, p.83].

A Refusal of Mother

Each mother and daughter is a receptor and transmitter of a cosmic flux and flow with the potential for opening ever more doors to the feminine way of being. As the fabric of former orders is reconstructed becoming conscious of how mother and daughter images live inside helps a woman manifest her life. She becomes centered on her own axis and expresses the autonomy of her body and psyche, remaining unswayed by cultural dictates.

However, a Puella woman feels the wounds from the transgenerational mothers ignored, betrayed creativity and insufficient female potency. The emotional distance, disapproval or blame from mother forms a vacuum of intimacy between them that is compounded by the cultural lack of favorable

adult feminine images of all ages. Unable to appreciate the maternal, a daughter feels unlovable and this attitude brings alienation from her body, the earth and can escalate into a hatred of life. “She started out in the world with averted face...and all the while the world and life pass by her like a dream—an annoying source of illusions, disappointments, and irritations” [Jung, 1959, par. 185].

When there is discomfort, in whatever form, with mother and the feminine, instincts are injured and a woman may experience problems with her female organs, remain unconscious of her ability to conceive or be creative and repudiates or rebels against her feminine nature. The healthy attachment to the feminine is inhibited. In this instance, a daughter can develop rage at her mother that evolves into abhorrence against becoming like her. A woman forms her feminine identity against her mother, in contrast and maybe even in spite of her. Such an attitude becomes upsetting for mothers and daughters, exerting crushing demands or creating inertia associated with low self-worth. Some women are so frustrated in how to use their feminine potency that they give up altogether expressing autonomy. The mother complex in this type of woman is manifested in depressive moods, constant dissatisfaction with herself and the whole of reality [von Franz, 2000, p. 126].

She might experience a feeling of crushing maternal self-annihilation and a mother’s guilt-inducing refusal of her autonomy, a disturbing netherworld of

psychological oppression and need for release. Or, the pressure to achieve, especially from her mother, can become the distorted and frustrated mirroring turned onto her self. At the deepest level, it seems that she could not feel close or secure with mother unless she is achieving. Just being her self did not seem sufficient. Through the eyes of her mother, she feels doomed to be enveloped in her mother's unexplored shadow.

The Shadow of Her Body

Operating in the tradition of feminine passivity, many Puella women stay dependent, immature and unaware not knowing what they want or do not want and unable to express themselves. Puella lives as if life goes on forever while she remains stuck on a treadmill of predicable responses, repetitive and self-deprecating behaviors and thoughts that includes a disturbed relationship to her body.

She allows self and other exploitation partly due to her compliance with demeaned roles. The attitude to herself as inferior while striving for perfection reflect the brutalizing and fragmented parts of our culture that crush her. Yet, if she remains mute, she will be mutilated by avoiding self-knowledge [Van Dyne, 1993, p. 54]. In her way of representing inner and outer realities, she acts ineffectual and suppressed, cornered into immobility, the feminine ego wrenched from the true self. Like a puppet, deprived of independent action, the

woman is vulnerable, and then erased, unable to forge her own image. Self-hatred is at work in the desire to be rid of her body--because it is female.

Puella is the woman unable to use her talents due to some internally imposed super ideal, a feeling that frustrates yet has been with her for as long as she can remember. For Puella, the pressure to be perfect means that what she considers unacceptable must be hidden from others. This often refers to various physical aspects, because there is always something wrong.

She seeks to please others while inside are fears about showing her real self. Even sex is a performance for approval but not a connection to express and receive love. A punishing core of "I don't deserve" creates an ever-present tension that cuts off pleasure in both mental and physical activities. This derives from the narcissistic wounds that create inertia and repress the aggression needed for entry into life. A sense of not being present promotes the continual search for the ideal rather than the real. She has a form of narcissism that has to do not with self-love but self-hate [Schwartz-Salant, 1982, p. 24]. Various modes of emotional protection and avenues of psychological escape are sought out as methods of defense that lead to an inauthentic existence. And, at the same time, she does not notice that the pressure of an ideal life gets in the way of living it.

Much as she strives to ignore it, the shadow draws her to pay attention. “Closer examination of the dark characteristics—that is, the inferiorities constituting the shadow—reveals that they have an emotional nature, a kind of autonomy, and accordingly an obsessive, or better possessive quality” [Campbell, 1971, p. 145]. Raised to be aware of her background, looks and the externals in life, yet equally trying to deny any shadowy parts puts Puella in conflict. In the difficulties of living, the body is associated with discomfort and repression. How many women cannot eat what they want, wear what they want, and express what they want—because nothing is perfect enough. Left with a split off and unrealistic self-reflection, the Puella woman needs a perfect body, but not one to enjoy. Denying the body leaves a woman without desire and the dispossession of her body means a bulk of her libido is devitalized and scattered. Likewise, the psychological dismemberment suggests physical alienation and fragmentation as well as the thwarted longings for emotional relatedness and the struggle to reconnect the personality.

The elements of self-hatred turn many women into treating their bodies like stone or with the desire to transcend them altogether. As a result, the natural body urges, instincts and feelings become repressed and fall into the unconscious. The writer Adrienne Rich commented on this, “But the fear and hatred of our bodies has often crippled our brains. We have tended either to

become our bodies—blindly, slavishly, in obedience to male theories about us—or to try to exist in spite of them” [1986, p. 284-285]. Jung says that the body depends on the psyche just as the psyche depends on the body. Body experiences bring one into the here and now and, “the striving to transcend the present level of consciousness through acceptance of the unconscious must give the body its due ” [1964, par. 195].

Therapy

Puella represents one of the dis-eases of our era--she does not breathe deeply, fears being emotionally touched and does not know how to be present to the basics of life, which is a collective discomfort. Jung [1956, p. 298] said, “The fear of life is a real panic...It is the deadly fear of the instinctive, the unconscious, the inner [woman] who is cut off from life by [her] continual shrinking back from reality”.

The task of Puella is to be present, which is no small task. The search for her self cannot be a copy of the collective female model built on maleness or male images. She can no longer simply rely on outer adulation or putting on of masks, but access the spark within, according to her own particular, real rather than ideal, standards. She also cannot split the archetype of youth from age but learn to use the movement of youth into aging with honor and respect, inclusive of both. This involves engaging with the wounds, reclaiming the damaged parts,

and essentially integrating the shadow. By breaking down the ideal and using the strengths of the feminine she accesses the self, not only the ego, and can engage with being rather than taken in by doing.

Even as the self seeks a more benevolent and creative inner structure and the security of identity or attachment, it seems unavailable to her. In therapy she verbalizes a terror of falling into something described like an abyss. This is a frightening image but more so as it is accompanied by her sense of being shell-like and vulnerable to the harsh elements of life. She might be intuitively knowledgeable about her psychological needs, but unconsciously defensive against them. Because her foundation was early weakened, the anxiety of being easily erased and ignored takes precedence as it replicates that with absent father.

Sharing her narrative means the presence of another to witness, to hear and understand the story. This happens in therapy, as the narrative is no longer singular or held alone and within. New insights come forward to expand consciousness to get closer to her self. The situation confronts her with the opportunity to express, to make the self present as it emerges through language. Jung commented that analysis is a mutual and dialogical process. There is no understanding of the story without the one who understands. This understanding is negotiated between the author and

listener, patient and analyst. (Jung, 1934, par. 314)

It takes much patience because the unmasking of reality connotes threat to the front of self-reliance behind which lay the tender vulnerability. She is brought up against the put away and avoided feelings. The need for unconditional love, anxiety about hostility and expectation of refusal has held her back.

She retained a need to fill the emptiness with people, places and things and to compensate the void within. This object hunger and needs went unsatisfied and left the residue of being unsafe and uncared for. Even when getting what she craves, there remains a lingering sense the people are untrustworthy and unreliable and it will be taken away. As a result she can perform, but never really believe the role or the stage on which she finds herself.

The reliance on false images dams access to the natural instincts and keeps the real self walled off and silenced. Behind the veneer and the narcissism lies the genuineness of the void and the sorrows and traumas it contains (Solomon, 2004, p. 637). In this broken world, she lives insulated, fleeing anything representing imperfection and relying on the façade for hiding. She secretly withdraws concealing the cut off fragile core, internally unnoticed,

falsely safe but feeling nothing. This situation reflects the deprivations in her environment.

The therapeutic relationship tries to bring the pieces back together. Yet, the defenses keep on finding fault and problems in safety with another and reacting with distrust. She feels shame, humiliation, lost, worried about connection, unable to change and locked in internal combat against her self. How can she effectively use the therapy process? It is difficult to get through the glossy exterior. She goes on yet feeling marred and without acceptance. These are the very feelings that were affected from the absence of the father and that are still holding her in their grip. They do not let other stories in and preserve her in the same position of helplessness and lack of adequate reflection as with the absent father.

The therapist inevitably carries of the reminders of the parental complexes and she feels the old apprehension, cannot relax nor let down her guard. She anticipates abandonment and absence like happened with the father, especially if she lets herself become dependent. This reaction reflects the depth and extent of the emotional lacks and how hard it is for her to keep the therapeutic connection alive. According to Andre Green, [1997, p. 42] both therapist and client witness how the bad object keeps being resurrected and

both face the emptiness that returns as layer after layer of the emotional neglect becomes unwrapped.

It is a journey to learn to manage the discharge from internalized negative captors and the devouring aggression. The process begins with self-reproach and circles around to find her self. The desired transformation means she will have to hold the weight of the conflict between rebirth and annihilation, the tension of the opposites.

Summary

For Puella, the shadowy recesses reveal the parts calling for recognition—accessing her feminine core, resolving the yearning and melancholy, creating support and feeling from within so that she can be present to her individuality and creativity. The girl becomes a woman through accepting the shadow, acquiring patience and healthy regard for herself, including attention to others. In the process, she discovers the meaning in her personal drama and this is a step towards healing social determinants and collective attitudes that limit the feminine. Her troubling wish for autonomy and stymied aggression transforms into energy for independence of body, mind and soul, one figure of the feminine that leads us towards the creative and the unusual. Resolving her dilemmas is central for the further development of females. Jung said [1964, p. 130] “Woman today...gives expression to...the urge to live a complete life, a

longing for meaning and fulfillment, a growing disgust with senseless one-sidedness, with unconscious instinctuality and blind contingency”.

*Where the voice of the wind calls our wandering feet, Through echoing forest and echoing street,
With lutes in our hands ever-singing we roam, All men are our kindred, the world is our home.
Our lays are of cities whose lustre is shed, The laughter and beauty of women long dead; The
sword of old battles, the crown of old kings, And happy and simple and sorrowful things.
What hope shall we gather, what dreams shall we sow? Where the wind calls our wandering
footsteps we go. No love bids us tarry, no joy bids us wait: The voice of the wind is the voice of
our fate.*

--Sarojini Naidu

Real isn't how you are made,' said the Skin Horse. 'It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real.'

'Does it hurt?' asked the Rabbit.

'Sometimes,' said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. 'When you are Real you don't mind being hurt.'

'Does it happen all at once, like being wound up,' he asked, 'or bit by bit?'

'It doesn't happen all at once,' said the Skin Horse. 'You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time

you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand.”

Margery Williams, *The Velveteen Rabbit*

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