SOUTHERN ARIZONA FRIENDS OF JUNG

SUMMER 2025 NEWSLETTER

From the President

June, 2025

Dear Friends of Jung,

SAFOJ has had a very eventful year! It started with our Annual Meeting in September when the Board members took us on a tour of *Jung Around the World,* which highlighted how different countries are engaging with Jung. In October we hosted Kelly Bulkeley for *Dream Interpretations: Ancient and Modern.* He shared a wealth of knowledge on dreams and told us about his Dream Database. In November Kathy Keler hosted an in-person movie night. We watched *The Seen and the Unseen,* followed by a discussion led by Lauren Raine, and Debby Urken introduced us to Authentic Movement. In January the Board had an all-day retreat which used Positive Inquiry to evaluate our past programs and plan our future programs.

A major part of the retreat was devoted to deciding how best to use a $25,000 grant we received from the William E. Hall Foundation, held at the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona. SAFOJ's goal is to promote the psychology of C. G. Jung through lectures, workshops, and discussion groups designed for both lay and professional interests. Because of this generous grant we will now be able to reach out to lesser served populations in Tucson like students, marginalized populations, and the elderly. One of Jung's major teachings is individuation, or forming a stable sense of self, identity, and purpose. Our programs aim to help participants with this process.

In February Richard Tarnas presented a Zoom program, *the Many-Layered Mystery of the Human Journey.* This was an excellent presentation that provided a lot of food for thought. In March we had a very interesting program by Wolf and Lisa Wahpepah, *Traditional Native Prayer Ceremonies and Cultivating Deeper Relationships with the Natural World and Your Community.* They emphasized the importance of using our right brains in living in today's fractured world. In April we hosted Jane Clapp. She presented an immersive experience designed to guide participants into exploring heartbreak stemming from suffering, trauma and spiritual injury. Through deeply personal story, released movement, and artful expression she invited us to understand engaged life in the body as the opening to the depths of the psyche and the Self, and to healing of trauma and broken heartedness, following the call of mystical aliveness.

In addition to our Zoom presentations, we also offer several small groups. The Men's Group is very active with deep, meaningful conversation. The Book Group is discussing *Our Uncertain World*, which generates discussion that helps navigate these uncertain times through a Jungian prism. Helen Landerman hosts a Dream Group, *All of the Above,* in which participants share dreams. "Different perspectives are given, and meanings emerge. Multiple levels are revealed by listeners' projections and associations, and all can share in the healing messages." And Charles Gillispie is collaborating with Mohammed Al-Sammak at La Frontera to host a dream group with their clients. Kathy Keler has presented several evenings at her Carport Theatre which combine art, drama, dance, and music which convey Jungian themes.

So, it has been a busy and exciting year for SAFOJ! We are planning now for next year's programs which will start in September. If you have ideas or speakers you would like to hear, please let us know.

Ann Bright

From the Board

Member at Large **Lauren Raine** attended the 2025 Association for the Study of Women and Mythology (ASWM) Conference, which was held this year in Oro Valley.

The theme of the Conference this year (March 27-29 2025} was
“Sacred Stories of the Sentient Earth: Scholarship for Collaboration, Intervention, Reciprocity." She presented a paper, called "NUMINA: Communion with Spirit of Place" .

"The Conference, which occurs in different states bi-yearly, was fascinating and inspiring as always," - Lauren said.

Congratulations to Lauren for receiving the "Bridgit Award" for lifetime achievement in the arts.

Community Theater with Jungian themes

BY KATHY KELER, SAFOJ TREASURER

Since 2011, it has been my great pleasure to facilitate community performance events in Tucson through a small neighborhood venue, the Carport Theater. From the outset, our events explored philosophical themes in unconventional ways, sometimes described as “metaphysical vaudeville.” This became more and more an exploration of Jungian-oriented thought, especially after I got involved with SAFOJ in 2021. In 2022 we presented “Anima/Animus 2.0” at the Sea of Glass downtown, and later did a couple of shows on the theme of apocalypse, much influenced by my reading of Edinger’s book Archetype of the Apocalypse. This spring, the theme was archetypes in general, as part of a showcase titled Maiden, Warrior, Magician, King. We presented theater, poetry, music, dance and video. The event was enjoyed by people either very familiar with, or quite new to Jungian ideas, and engendered some lively discussion. We look forward to more such events in the future, and invite anyone who might be interested to visit carporttheater.com and contact the administrator.

Movement artist and teacher
Debby Urken

Board Member at Large
Dan Sweet

Integrating the Shadow: A Jungian Approach to Understanding Psychological and Social Dynamics

BY CHRISTINE CLAWLEY, SAFOJ BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE

Most people who enter into therapy in an attempt to relieve personal suffering and symptom reduction, but for those that decide to continue in longer-term therapy, analysis, or dedicate themselves to further personal development often become more aware of their blind spots, unconscious motivations, self-sabotage, and personal shadow (the part of the self that is outside of conscious awareness or includes repressed thoughts or feelings). Often, they begin to develop greater self-compassion, deeper understanding of the impact of transgenerational trauma, family of origin dysfunction, and the impact of socio-economic, cultural, societal, and even historical influences. Ultimately, therapy is an attempt to become more integrated, conscious, and self-aware as a human being.

However, one of my own personal critiques of psychotherapy is the over-emphasis on the pathology and symptomology the individual's experiences to the exclusion of societal, cultural, economic, spiritual/religious, and even technological factors. An individual does not exist within a vacuum and it can be profoundly helpful to approach psychotherapy from this perspective. One can gain a deeper understanding of the self by exploring influences, factors, and events that contribute to current presentation of symptomology, as well as inner strengths and resiliency. While a diagnosis can be empowering, helpful, and even liberating for some clients, it can also be stigmatizing, re-traumatizing, or disempowering for others. No healthcare professional would blame a patient with a broken leg for bleeding, so why would any other professional blame or shame a patient with psychological or emotional wounds that result from surviving traumatic experiences. These symptoms are as natural as breathing, and it is often our societal discomfort with and our inability to properly support individuals who have survived traumatic circumstances that often leads many to deny, minimize, dismiss, pathologize, or simply turn away from. From a family systems and Jungian perspective, this common response could be interpreted as an extension of shadow projection and scapegoating.

In working with hundreds of individuals and families over the past thirteen years, it becomes easier and easier to identify who is the scapegoat or identified patient, hero child, enabler, and the most psychologically or physically disordered individual whom the family system revolves around. Typically, the scapegoat or identified patient is brought to therapy by their parents or of their own desire to "fix" themselves; however, the scapegoat is typically the most sensitive, observant, or strongest individual of the family unit and they are attacked or "sacrificed" because they see beyond the denial and false family narrative and become a distraction from the primary issues in the family. The hero individual in the family has their own challenges as they often struggle with perfectionism, workaholism, and it may take longer to come to terms with and truly recognize the family dysfunction.

It is truly profound to watch these same family system dynamics unfold in groups, organizations, social, and political movements. Often, "the scapegoat," "the other," "the outcast," "the freak," or "the underdog" is attacked, punished, and made as an example to enforce dominant norms or to help the disordered individual to maintain power and control. The psychologist Jennifer Freyd coined the term DARVO (deny, attack, and reverse victim and offender position) to better explain the psychological mechanism behind intimate partner violence, abuse, and scapegoating. Understanding how effective scapegoating, gaslighting, and psychological abuse can be helps us protect against these tactics on both an individual and organizational/collective level.

Jungian or Depth Psychology, as well as many spiritual, religious, and healing paths aim to improve awareness and consciousness of the true or deeper self, encourage reflection, as well as taking inventory of one's blind spots, faults, destructive tendencies, and unconscious patterns. For Jung, individuation is the path to wholeness and psychological integration. To undergo this process, one must be willing to take off their mask or persona and have the courage to make contact with their own shadow and acknowledge repressed feelings—aspects of the self we often ignored or cut ourselves off from, because it can be a challenging and difficult process that requires honesty and courage. This process also involves balancing the anima/animus (internal feminine and masculine aspects), tension of the opposites, and recognizing our capacity for both good and evil that resides within us. The more integration of the shadow or the greater the willingness to feel, look at, and acknowledge these disowned parts and accept them with compassion and love, the more whole we become and the more we can stop shadow-projection and hold compassion for the other, scapegoat, outcast, madman, or the other.

The process of shadow-work or individuation is no small task, but collectively the more we take responsibility for our own psychological healing, the more empowered we become. Furthermore, at this time in history, self-understanding could not be more important. With multiple converging, existential issues, including climate change and widespread pollution, the potential for global water crisis, the rapid development of artificial general intelligence (AGI), increased inflation and income inequality, socio-political turmoil, nuclear proliferation, and increased automation and weaponized AI, which could lead to more frequent conflicts, erosion of seemingly stable institutions, the permanent loss of millions of jobs, and profound psychological and societal changes. Never before in known history has humanity faced such critical global issues.

Many psychologists indicate that during times of increased uncertainty, people tend to seek stability and order, which they believe they will find in strong leaders. In addition, during times of crisis, psychological research shows us that the reptilian brain and flight, fight, freeze (FFF) response is activated as the prefrontal cortex, which is involved in higher level thinking such as decision-making, critical thinking, planning, and regulating emotions and behavior shuts down. In essence, instinctual responses based upon fear take over and it becomes more difficult to think rationally. Consequently, practices involving mindfulness, compassion, shadow, or Depth work can help override the FFF response. In this kind of environment and time in history, to think calmly and coherently could be interpreted as a profoundly creative and revolutionary act.

"When we look at human history, we see only what happens on the surface, and even this is distorted in the faded mirror of tradition. But what has really been happening eludes the inquiring eye of the historian, for the true historical event lies deeply buried, experienced by all and observed by none. It is the most private and most subjective of psychic experiences. Wars, dynasties, social upheavals, conquests, and religions are but the superficial symptoms of a secret psychic attitude unknown even to the individual himself, and transmitted by no historian; perhaps the founders of religions give us the most information in the world…In our most private and most subjective lives we are not only the passive witnesses of our age, and its sufferers, but also its makers. We make our own epoch." —CG Jung

The Dream Path to Psychedelics

AUTHOR: STEPHEN SCOTT

As a professional counselor, I've helped a number of people prepare for psychedelic journeys. The kinds of journeys people seek my help with take place at ayahuasca retreats or in individual psilocybin sessions with a therapist. These substances, ayahuasca and psilocybin, are classified as Tryptamines and occur naturally in specific plants.

These days, in the middle of the psychedelic renaissance, I find most people come to me informed. Sometimes ridiculously informed. They read Michael Pollen's book, How to Change Your Mind. They revisit old classics like Doors of Perception by Aldous Huxley or The Yage Letters by William Burroughs.

They know Tryptamines will challenge them psychologically. They read No Bad Parts by Richard Swartz or In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts by Gabor Mate. They watch YouTube videos that describe the Altered States of Consciousness Scale. They learn about the founding fathers of the psychedelic movement, individuals like Timothy Leary and Stan Grof. They watch TED talks. They listen to podcasts. They subscribe to the Multidisciplinary Association of Psychedelic Studies' newsletter and thus receive information about political developments that relate to the research and legalization of psychoactive substances.

Information Doesn't Equal Readiness

Whew! That's a lot of information, which makes my job a lot easier. But it doesn't make people ready to experience psychoactive substances. Stan Grof described psychedelics as non-specific amplifiers (Grof, 1970). What Grof wanted to accentuate by using this term is the absolute unpredictability of psychedelics.

We have no way of knowing what aspects of our inner reality or outer reality will be enhanced or distorted when we ingest ayahuasca or psilocybin. Nor do we know how we will react to these amplifications when we are in the middle of them.

The first thing I do with people who want to prepare for the use of Tryptamines therapeutically is teach them how to work with night dreams. Viewed from the analytic tradition of depth psychology, night dreams are naturally occurring non-specific amplifiers. All of my clients have encountered bizarre psychic formations in their dreams. They have encountered aliens; been chased by zombies; confessed to murders they know they didn't commit. In dreams, they re-enter their childhood homes and discover rooms they've never seen before; they get a chance to say goodbye to people who have died; and sometimes, they can telecommunicate, see through walls, or travel back in time.

Dreams as Practice Grounds for Psychedelic States

Dreams and psychedelic experiences have a lot in common. They both seem to be made from material that belongs to us personally, such as sensations in our body or specific scenes from childhood. But both are also made from material outside of our actual lived experiences. We may encounter Aztec gods with whom we have no experience or encounter a devastated, Apocalyptic landscape that we've never seen nor wish to see.

The ability to tolerate this fusion of the personal and the imaginal is a necessary skill for the individual who wants to benefit from a psychedelic experience therapeutically. Furthermore, it is essential to learn how to construct meaning from these formations, accepting them as a language designed to help us advance in our psychological and spiritual development (Aixala, 2022).

Here is a simple example:

A man wanted my help recently to prepare for an ayahuasca retreat in Peru. I requested that he bring a recent dream to our first session to help us learn what was already being amplified in his psyche. The dream that he brought placed him in a grocery store. He was trying to shop for food but almost all of the shelves were empty. He was reminded of the grocery shortages during the pandemic but stated the condition of the store was even worse than that.

The Power of Inner Resources

The most significant aspect of this dream was not its content but the manner in which my client attempted to work with its meaning. Instead of exploring personal associations or more universal metaphors, he simply entered the dream into ChatGPT and brought the summary with him to our session!

Suddenly, I felt like we were in his dream together. Here was a man who lacked inner resources. He struggled to spontaneously explore his interior world and unpackage his own inner-guiding intelligence. We worked for three months together, using the structure of his first dream as our guide. We conducted an inventory of his inner resources; we attempted to figure out how they had become so depleted and who could help him restock the shelves. Our goal was to ensure that he would have what he needed, physically and psychologically, while in Peru.

Meditation and the Mind's Inner Terrain

The second thing I do with people who want to prepare for the use of Tryptamines therapeutically is help them cultivate a meditation practice. There is no better way to prepare people for "dread of ego dissolution" or "visionary restructuralization." These are two very challenging categories of experience people commonly have under the influence of psychedelics (Aday, 2021). Consequently, they experience anxiety, a sense of disembodiment, and cognitive disorientation after the onset of the psychoactive substance.

Scientifically, the greatest benefit from meditation, in regard to the use of psychedelics, is regulating the function of our amygdala. This is an area of our brain that processes emotions, particularly fear and anxiety. A disciplined meditation practice helps decrease the reactivity of our amygdala, even when we are not meditating (Powell, 2018).

This, in turn, allows our parasympathetic nervous system to function properly, helping our system rebound after exposure to distress, instead of becoming fixed in fight, flight, or freeze responses. Developing agency in this area of our brains is a necessary skill for anyone who wants to work with psychoactive substances like ayahuasca and psilocybin..

Aldous Huxley famously described his experience with Tryptamines as the opening of a reducing valve. He argued that the brain functions, in large part, as a suppressor of information and psychedelics release that suppression, allowing us to experience expanded consciousness (Huxley, 1956). His description is oddly similar to the effects of meditation. It also releases suppression while expanding awareness.

For example, if we sit in silence and focus on our breathing for twenty minutes, we will become aware of sounds we weren't conscious of before. We will also become aware of mental chatter and physical sensations previously shrouded in unconsciousness. Most importantly, in meditation, we gain a familiarity with the content underneath the suppressing function in our brains. Long before we sit with ayahuasca, or psilocybin, we need to get comfortable with stillness and the material that rises to our consciousness in this state. This is the very material that will likely be amplified in some regard when we ingest a psychoactive substance.

Though working with night dreams and a meditation practice can help prepare people for a psychedelic experience, these practices do not nullify the intensity or unpredictability of psychedelics in any way. These practices don't determine the shape or trajectory of a journey. Nor do they resolve the mystical nature of these altered states of consciousness.

At best, I think these two practices help people integrate the experiences they have and better accept the nonspecific amplifications with which they are presented. I find that people who are comfortable with the ambiguity of dream consciousness and can tolerate long periods of stillness are less likely to panic during psychedelic experiences; less likely to believe "something is wrong" when they encounter disturbing material, and less likely to experience self-recrimination after ingesting a substance that challenges them.

Practical Tips for Finding Your Practice
Starting a dream journal is a simple way to begin preparing for a psychedelic experience. Simply capturing our psychic formations in complete sentences is a discipline that will help us become familiar with our inner world. The plot scenarios, images, and recurring themes from our dreams are a language we need to learn how to translate.

A very basic translation tool is converting images, especially bizarre images, into open-ended questions. For example, if we dream of an alien encounter, we may ask, “What parts of myself am I alienated from and need to encounter?” or “Who do I feel alienated from in my life?” or “What behaviors do I exhibit that alienate other people?” or “What kinds of places feel alien to me that I would like to encounter?”

In this exercise, we don’t need to be concerned about a right or wrong interpretation. We just need to cultivate an open dialogue with bizarre images, think associatively, and gravitate toward the kinds of questions that are most interesting to us. This is an essential skill required to process meaning from psychedelic experiences.

Regarding meditation, I recommend clients begin a movement practice before embarking on a sitting practice. Most of my clients wake each morning, prepare coffee and sit to drink it. They shower, prepare breakfast, and then sit to eat it. They drive to work, sitting, and then work all day, sitting, and then drive home again, sitting. And wonder why it’s so challenging to sit and “clear” their mind of thoughts!

If we integrate vigorous walking into our daily routine, it’s nice to sit afterward, and experience our nervous system recalibrate and achieve homeostasis. It's a pleasant experience to exert ourselves, increase our heart rate, and then sit to witness our heart rate recovery to baseline.

Since Tryptamines increase blood pressure suddenly, the onset of a psychedelic experience can be interpreted as a fight or flight response from our nervous system. When we gain experience exerting ourselves, and then sit quietly to recover, we normalize the increases in pressure and volume in our cardiovascular system, and stop perceiving it as a threat.

This is the beginning of cultivating agency over our minds even as our bodies communicate potential threats. As you step into the expansive realms of your psyche, let the lessons learned from the shadows of your dreams and the stillness of meditation guide you through the unpredictable waters of psychedelic exploration.

References

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SAFOJ ANNUAL MEETING

After our fiscal pause over the summer, we look forward to an exciting Annual Meeting in September, on the theme of anima/animus in literary fiction.

We hope you will join us for this meeting, as well as for our fall programs which will be confirmed and posted on our Upcoming Events page over the summer. Please note that we will also be listing Phoenix Friends of Jung events, as we have a reciprocal agreement with them that gives our members a discount to their events. Meanwhile, it is not too early to renew your membership on our website

Southern Arizona Friends of Jung is a non-profit organization that provides educational programming to the public about the work and theories of C.G. Jung. These educational offerings are not intended to function as professional counseling or psychotherapy for participants.

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