



Weaving Voices

Contributions of the Members
of the C. G. Jung Society of Sydney

We are always on the lookout for material for Weaving Voices. If you would like to submit an article of around 1700 words or suggest suitable material, please email Stephen Goodfellow at cjung@jungdownunder.com or phone 02 9520 3870

Threads of the first thirty years

By Erla Ronan, Vice-President

This year the C. G. Jung Society of Sydney celebrates 30 years of regular monthly meetings, seminars, workshops and community building. What is it that draws people in Sydney to explore and discuss the ideas of a man who had famously indicated that the last thing he wanted to be known as, was a Jungian!

Significant anniversaries prompt us to reflect on meaning. In this 30th anniversary year we have adopted the notion of exploring the mutable elements that bring us as individuals to be part of the collective called the C. G. Jung Society: what brings us to connect with this group of people? What has been our experience of this organic being? What are the quintessential moments that have struck us to the core; challenged us to the bone; rocked us with laughter; changed us in such a way that we know we have been changed?

In our November talk this year Craig San Roque will be inviting us to reflect on the moments that stand out for us. What memories, dreams and reflections would we bring to a discussion of where we are now? How will we weave our experiences, aspirations, insights and fantasies into a tapestry that for this moment of time reflects who we are now, as much as where we have come from, and where we are going?

Two decades ago I followed my cousin through a nondescript door in North Sydney, between the art-house posters of the Walker Street Cinema on the left and the glass-fronted panels of a Korean Restaurant on my right. I was struck by the smell of concrete dust, and the focused bustle of people in the tiny foyer. "It will be fun!" Rita promised as the lift lurched up to the meeting rooms of the Theosophical Society. Neville Drury was leading about 70 people through a Death Meditation to a divine white light. I was terrified of inadvertently slipping over to the other side! This was absolutely unknown territory for me. In retrospect, the ingredients of sense of place, fantasy, food, fun, complete unknowingness, death and transformation all made this a fitting introduction to the Jung Society of Sydney!

The Jung Society began inauspiciously enough when Jean McManus, our longest-serving continuous member, returned to Australia from London where she had trained in Art Therapy with Jungian Analysts from 1950 – 1964. Jean relates that in the late sixties there was no forum concentrating on Jungian thought in Sydney. Linking up with like-minded people including Brian Gorman and Bett and John Henshaw, and a little later Eva and Charles Hulley and Anne Kentwell, Jean held meetings in her own home at Randwick St., Woolwich. Meanwhile, in 1953, Mrs M.I. Rix Weaver, the first Australian to study and graduate from the C. G. Jung Institute Zurich, and for many years the only Jungian Analyst in Australia, had initiated a Jung Society in Perth. In 1976, she was instrumental in founding the Australian and New Zealand Society of Jungian Analysts (ANZSJA). Out of small seedlings, larger things can grow!

The Sydney Society was constituted 100 years after C. G. Jung's birth in 1875, and our initiation into Jungian material was on a grand scale. C. G. Jung's nephew, then working at the Swiss consulate in Canberra, arranged a massive collection of Jung's

These motifs recur to produce other quintessential moments. In the early 80s, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross was presenting a public lecture *On Death and Dying* in the Town Hall, having given an earlier talk at the Jung Society. Connecting consciously to the myriad of feelings stirred by the recent death of my mother, I felt immeasurable sorrow and loss wash through me. Intermingled with the warm light of the room, the agitation of the emotions in the gathering, and the steady rain outside, the evening felt awash with grief. As



in the warp & weft of the C. G. Jung Society of Sydney

works, writings, paintings and correspondence to be displayed in Sydney. Hundreds of people attended the exhibition at the Theosophical Society before it travelled on to Melbourne.

The Inaugural Annual General Meeting appointed Dr. Leon Petchkovsky as President, Charles Hulley and Brian O’Gorman as Vice-Presidents, Anne Kentwell as Librarian, Eduard Van der Ent as Treasurer and Jean McManus as Secretary. Honorary members were named as Dr. Lee (Gladesville), Dr. Anne Noonan (Rome), Dr. Rosemary and Donald Broadribb (Zurich), Janice Daw (Zurich), Patrick Jensen (Zurich), and Terry McBride (Zurich). The local patron was listed as Dr. Marie Bashir, Psychiatrist.

The proposed activities of the Society were for regular monthly meetings to be held on the 2nd Saturday each month, play and creativity weekends, and the collation of reference and library resources. The C.G. Jung Institute of New York donated the first four library books. Membership would be \$8 per annum.

the discussion drew to a close and people spilled out of the building, the heavy rain pounding the city became tropical lightning-streaked torrents and we faced a river of water flowing between shop fronts on George Street. This elemental empathy struck me as a true resonance of the quality of the personal and collective experiences of loss, and a fantastic, tricksterish celebration of life as we took off our shoes to wade knee-deep through the currents like kids in a creek bed.

Water flowing through the heart of Australia’s largest city in such abundance carries other images of the city, the state, the nation. The Jung Society has been part of a particularly Australian Jungian enquiry into the notion of doing psychological work in country. The Republic Forum jointly hosted by the Jung Society and the University of Western Sydney in 1999 addressed the pain and grief of immigrant and indigenous peoples uprooted from their sacred places, and from the lands that gave them birth.

Do we dream the land? Or does the land dream us? Jung proposed that we project into nature our own unconscious material as part of the process of existing in nature. Maisie Cavenagh, Aboriginal Elder, proposed that one means of reconciling these chasms of grief, separation and alienation, is to consciously connect to the spirit of one’s homeland – through sitting, meditating, dreaming on one’s symbol for the place – and then bringing that same attitude of connection and reverence to the place where one finds one’s-self now. If you cannot be where you were born, then be born anew wherever you are. Connecting to the land in this way requires spiritual focus and psychological work to bring to consciousness our relationship to our country. It brings us into relationship with Anima Mundi – the enlivened, en-souled world. Exploring how we enter psyche and place continues to be a rich exploration for me, and I am particularly grateful for the diversity and complexity of ideas, discussions, enquiries, and the opportunities to formulate my own responses provided by the Jung Society of Sydney.

These personal cameos are offered with the hope they may inspire some wider reflections in preparation for the celebrations in November. Who knows? You may have been there – and had an entirely different event!