

“The Wounded Healer”

A dynamic interview with Thomas Moore, Murray Stein, and Russell Lockhart.

“The analyst must go on learning endlessly. It is his own hurt that gives the measure of his power to heal.” C.G. Jung. CW 16. Para. 239

Russell Lockhart obtained his Doctoral degree in Human Psychophysiology in 1965 from the University of Southern California. He entered analytical training in 1969, and graduated from the C. G. Jung Institute of Los Angeles in 1975. He served as Director of Analyst Training from 1979 to 1982, and since 1974, has been in private practice.

He has served on the faculties at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and University of California, Berkeley. He was a research psychologist at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Director of the Psychophysiological Research Laboratory at Camarillo State Hospital. Dr. Lockhart is the author of *Dreams, Bones & the Future* (with Paco Mitchell, 2015), *Words as Eggs: Psyche in Language and Clinic* (Spring, 1983; reprinted 2012); *Psyche Speaks: A Jungian Approach to Self* (Chiron, 1987; reprinted 2014) and *Secrets of the Undergroundtrader* (with Jea Yu (McGraw-Hill, 2003). Currently, he has two books in progress: *Gleanings From the Dreamfield* and *Hints & Helps for Short Term Traders*.

Dr. Lockhart was born and raised in Los Angeles. He and his wife Frankie have been married 55 years and have four children. They live in Everett, Washington.

My first contact with Russell occurred in 1973, when he shared with me his work with cancer patients. We met again in 1982, when he presented the Inaugural Series of The C. G. Jung Lectures at the C. G. Jung Foundation of New York. This interview was conducted by email in 2015. E-mail: ral@ralockhart.com.

Thomas Moore was born in Detroit. At 13 he entered the Servite religious order of the Catholic Church in preparation for a life of teaching and ministry. He left the order before being ordained.

He received his PhD in religion from Syracuse University. His many publications include: *The Care of the Soul*, *The Soul's Religion*, *The Soul of Sex*, *Dark Eros*, *Rituals of the Imagination*, *The Planet's Within*, *A Blue Fire*, *Meditations*, *Soulmates*, *The Re-enchantment of Everyday Life*, *The Education of the Heart*, *The Book of Job*, *Original Self*, *Dark Nights of the Soul* and *A Life at Work*.

He and his wife, Hari Kirin, live in New Hampshire, with their two children, Siobhán and Abraham.

Murray Stein is a graduate of Yale University, Yale Divinity School, and received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. He received his Diploma from the C. G. Jung Institute in Zurich in 1973.

He had a private practice in Wilmette, Illinois, from 1980 to 2003 and was a training analyst with the C. G. Jung Institute of Chicago. Since 2003, he has lived in Switzerland as a training analyst with the International School of Analytical Psychology in Zurich.

Murray is an ordained minister (retired) in the United Presbyterian Church. He is a founding member of the Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts and was the first president of the Chicago Society of Jungian Analysts (1980–1985).

He is a former president of the International Association for Analytical Psychology (2001–2004) and is currently president of ISAP Zurich.

He is the author of several books, including *In Midlife: A Jungian Perspective*, *Transformation: Emergence of the Self*, *Jung's Map of the Soul: An Introduction*, and *Jung's Treatment of Christianity: The Psychotherapy of a Religious Tradition*, and the editor of *Jungian Psychoanalysis*.

Murray and his wife, Jan, have two children, Sarah and Christopher, and four grandchildren.

Robert S. Henderson is a Poet, Jungian Psychotherapist and ordained Protestant Minister in Glastonbury, Connecticut. He and his wife, Janis, a psychotherapist, are the authors of the three-volume book, *Living with Jung: "Interviews" with Jungian Analysts*. Many of their interviews have been published in *Quadrant*, *Spring Journal*, *Psychological Perspectives*, *Jung Journal*, and *Harvest*. Correspondence: 244 Wood Pond Road, Glastonbury, CT 06033. E-mail: Rob444@cox.

ROBERT:

How do you understand what the Wounded Healer is?

TOM:

I often say that I have been in therapy for forty years, meaning that I have been the therapist and yet very much "in therapy." Working with others, I regularly come up against limitations in my knowledge, courage and maturity. Daily I am humbled by the dedication I see in my clients and their tenacity as they deal with many issues I struggle with myself. This humbling doesn't take away the confidence and authority I feel in doing my job. I can be both the flawed human being and the effective therapist.

The equilibrium I am describing is not perfect, either. There are days when I am overconfident and times when I wonder if I can continue doing this work, so aware I am of my personal failures. Overall, though, I have learned to live with the mixture of ignorant person and knowledgeable guide. By the way, I'm not advocating a balance. I never look for a balance in matters like this, even though people automatically think that way when dealing with opposites. I want a passionate life that is not balanced but that moves constantly along a range of possibilities. I like the image used by both Nicolas of Cusa and W.B. Yeats of dynamic cones or gyres in which opposites are constantly in flux as they intersect each other's space.

I have to know that I have strength, knowledge and vision that may help my client deal with complicated and highly emotional matters and at the same time never forget my own mistakes

and frailties. It's more like just being a complicated person in relation to my client—not clearly superior and not collapsed into my inferiority.

Years ago, at the prodding of Rafael Lopez-Pedraza, I read the Marquis de Sade's horrifying fiction and inspiring non-fiction essays and wrote a book about the Sadean dynamics in human relationships, *Dark Eros*. I came out of that with the image of the "wounding healer," as a companion to the "wounded healer." This is yet another way of approach what Adolf Guggenbühl-Craig referred to as the "split archetype" of healer and patient. We can also become more aware of our role as wounder. But that is a topic for another time.

MURRAY:

The Wounded Healer is a mythologem, a god figure, an archetypal image. Chiron is the Greek version of this image; Christ is the biblical version of the same fundamental image. The difference is that Chiron had no choice in the matter because it happens to him and he cannot heal himself; Jesus Christ volunteered for the role, could have escaped from his suffering, but did not. Both are healers, both wounded, and both eventually ascend to the heavens at the end of the story. This image is to be distinguished from the healthy healer, Apollo in Greek myth, Jesus before his crucifixion in the biblical version. Christ combines both version, the healthy and the suffering.

RUSS

I first encountered Jung's concept of the "Wounded Healer" in the initial seminar of my analytic training back in 1969. The seminar leader made it clear that this was a fundamental necessity in our becoming not just analysts, but *healing* analysts. The wounds of the budding analyst must be front and center and worked with constantly, if one is to become a "wounded healer." I had no doubt this was true, and it was pounded into me so deeply that I have always been aware of this aspect of being an analyst.

Still, there were aspects of this wounded healer concept that I found unsettling. The first was that in the reference myth, Chiron is wounded by the hero Hercules with a poisoned arrow, and this wound *never* heals. A common fault in dealing with myths is that singular aspects are extracted and made into whole psychologies. Freud's use of the Oedipus myth is a prime example. So,

with Chiron, we have the image of being wounded by a hero figure, Hercules, the image of a poisoned arrow, a wound that never heals, and that out of this never-healing wound, Chiron becomes an epic healer. I won't belabor this here, but you can see the complexity that is ignored when the singular thread of "wounded healer" becomes the only thing considered from the richness of the myth.

Back then, I wondered whether one can still be a healer if one's wounds are healed, or is it only the never-healing wound that is essential to be a wounded healer? I began to reflect on the body's capacities to heal itself when cut, injured, or ill. It was in reflecting on this that I suddenly realized that the wounded healer was archetypal in nature, and for this reason, could not be limited to the "doctor." Rather, everyone had the potential of the wounded healer being activated in relation to inevitable wounding whether physical, psychological, or spiritual. From these realizations, my work since as an analyst has included awareness of the wounded healer in myself as well as in everyone I work with. I have come to recognize that the degree of healing is enhanced when the other's wounded healer is made manifest—this is not just the "doctor's" wounded healer.

In recent time, I have begun reflecting on the wounds in institutions, in work places, in cultures, countries and even wounds to the earth. The prospect of rousing the wounded healer in these larger dimensions fascinates me and brings attention to something that is rarely noticed but is most certainly a crucial resource for us to consider in these dark days.

MURRAY

In response to Tom's and Russ's thoughtful comments, I will say that I find their accounts sensitive and revealing, but think I take a slightly different view. I regard "the wounded healer" as an archetypal image and as such not something I would want to identify with or take personally. I don't see myself as a healer. Working as a psychotherapist now for forty-plus years, I can't say that I have ever healed anyone. If some measure of healing has occurred, it is a result of factors constellated in the relationship beyond my will or control. The healing I leave to the archetypal powers of the unconscious and the self.

I do of course, like Tom and Russ, regard myself as "wounded," not unlike my clients, and my wounds have doubtless contributed to the compassion I can feel for others, including the people

who come to me for analysis. On the other hand, my wounds may have also gotten in the way of my being able to make helpful contributions to the analytic work. They can clutter the mind and get in the way.

I look for manifestations of “the wounded healer” in dreams and visions emerging from the client’s unconscious. On the other hand, if I find myself suffering from the wounds of clients, I try to find some healing in myself and maybe this will transfer to them in the form of helpful comments or empathic communications on a less conscious level. This is a mild kind of shamanic operation and usually it is very subtle, unlike what one sees real shamans doing when they are engaged in healing.

One question that did occur to me while thinking about these matters is this: Is it possible for someone to be healed through the woundedness of another? This is the Christ model. His suffering is mysteriously curative for others. I wonder if this might happen sometimes, also mysteriously, in psychotherapy.

RUSS

Let’s see if it’s possible to unpack the image of wounded healer in the sense in which Jung is said to have coined the expression. What sort of wounding is it? And what does the healer *do* in relation to the wound that engenders the full sense of wounded healer, including the sense of the “never healing wound.”?

Tom, you first refer to *limitations* of your knowledge, courage and maturity. But are these “wounds” in the sense we are after here? To be sure they are limitations, even inabilities, that all of us face and ethically require of us a never-ending development. Do you mean these limitations to be wounds in the sense that Jung refers to?

The second theme you mention is “humility.” I’m reminded of John 13:1-17, which is often referred to in discussions of the wounded healer, where Jesus washes the feet of the disciples at the last supper, and when the disciples object to his humbling himself, he makes clear this is a lesson they all need to learn, a lesson in humility. But in what sense is this example of humility a

“wounding” of Jesus or his disciples? Is it a wounding to their pride? In what way are the disciples wounded healers?

Jung is credited with coining the phrase “wounded healer,” but this phrase is never used by Jung in his published writings, seminars, letters, or in *The Red Book*. One place where Jung refers to the “idea” is in paragraph 239 of his essay, “Fundamental Questions of Psychotherapy” in part one of his *Collected Works*. Volume 16, *The Practice of Psychotherapy*, which Rob has quoted as an introduction to our topic. Jung writes: “...it is his own hurt that gives the measure of his power to heal. This and nothing else is the meaning of the Greek myth of the wounded physician.” (1951) This quote refers to foot note (3) referencing Carl Kerényi’s *Asklepios: Archetypal Image of the Physicians’ Existence*. He does not refer to Chiron directly who, as Murray noted, is the Greek version of the archetypal image of the wounded healer.

I have always been impressed with the extreme degree of *precision* in mythic imagery as well as in dream imagery. I take these precise details as psychic deposits in mythic stories that are crucial, informative and instructional and should not be ignored. Note that Jung refers to a book on Asclepius in relation to the “wounded physician.”

While Asclepius had a difficult “birth,” being snatched from the womb of his mother by Apollo, while she was burning on a pyre, he is not referred to as a wounded healer. His mother had been set afire because of her unfaithfulness to Apollo. Apollo took the infant to be raised and instructed in healing by Chiron. It was Chiron who was wounded with the never-healing wound by Hercules, the hero. Asclepius became the greatest healer, surpassing his father Apollo as well as his mentor Chiron. He was so good at healing that he could raise the dead to life again, and for this he was killed by Zeus with a thunderbolt, because Hades (Zeus’ brother) feared there would be no more souls coming to the nether world.

We can see how complex the mythical details and “back story” can be. And note that we have three healer images: Apollo Medicus, Chiron, the wounded healer, and Asclepius, the greatest physician and healer. These are each an aspect of healing potential and most likely an aspect of the healing potential in ourselves as well as our patients. Yet, Marie-Louise von Franz goes so

far as to say, “the wounded healer *is* the archetype of the Self and is at the bottom of all genuine healing procedures.”

And what do you make of this? Jung says in *Symbols of Transformation* (para. 448): “Being wounded by one’s own arrow signifies, therefore, a state of introversion.” Is this our heroic state wounding itself into a state of introversion? Is this a possible example of what Tom speaks of as the “wounding healer,” where we wound ourselves as a way *toward* deeper healing?

I throw out these bits and pieces to open further paths for our discussion.

ROBERT

As you understand Jung, what wound, or wounds did he discover in himself that gave him the measure of his own power to heal?

MURRAY

I’d like to thank Russ for his clarifying comments. If you go to Wikipedia and look up “wounded healer” you will get the impression that Jung used this concept quite a lot. In fact, as Russ shows, he does not. The Wikipedia entry also list a number of books that have “wounded healer” in the title and make reference to Jung. So we need to distinguish between Jung and the works of subsequent Jungians’s writings.

When I think of the ‘wounded healer’ I’m thinking of an archetypal figure. Perhaps this figure can be invoked, or constellated, in an analytical relationship, and in that case it would be a part of the process and belong to both people in the process. Both would receive the benefits, both would be healed. But, again, I’m thinking here of Christ (“by his wounds we are healed”) than about Chiron, who was a teacher of the physician, Asclepius. I don’t think Chiron healed with his wounds, not did Asclepius.

As far as the matter of a “self inflicted wound” is concerned, Jung reads that as introversion. It might be that the analyst’s ability to introvert contributes healing by constellating the archetypal powers.

THOMAS

Russ's point about reading images closely is an important one. Being imperfect is not the same as being wounded. So I ask myself, when I have really felt emotional wounds in my life, have they played a part, constructive or not, in my work with others? The ones that come to mind are from the early days of my practice, when my emotional wounds made me raw and open to the issues others brought me. I felt a certain effectiveness then that was due to my wounds. I didn't know much and was not experienced, but my capacity to empathize with my clients was strong. Now, years later, my experience is different. I have the confidence of experience, and that has replaced the power of feeling raw. I continue to be afflicted by life, but generally I feel less raw. Experience and more knowledge have a positive impact. I don't feel I ever healed with my wounds (No, I don't heal but try to evoke healing.) but they have allowed me not to be defended excessively in the work.

I'm quite taken by Murray's two references to Jesus healing through his suffering. For years I have tried to appreciate Jesus as an archetypal/mythic figure, but I haven't explored his role of healer in relation to his own wounds. His possible identity as a puer or young man figure harkens back to what I said about the role of my wounds early in my practice. Traditionally his physical wounds have been seen as openings of compassion, and that is certainly one way a healer's wounds may have positive effect. I'm also reminded of Rafael Lopez-Pedraza's suggestion that the spirit of the hermaphrodite in therapy can offer a constructive weakening and the Hermes spirit a constructive loss of dignity. We could discuss whether these are wounds. I think so.

RUSSELL. I think any wound, physical, psychological, or spiritual, has the *potential* for engendering the archetype of the wounded healer, as well as other archetypal prefigurations relating to healing. But your question is seeking specifics. A specific wound that Jung experienced, and one I believe was a major factor in his healing and in his access to powers of healing, is to be found in the precincts of introversion, to which I have already alluded. But to make this comprehensible requires some background, so bear with me.

The issue begins in Jung's early days as a medical student. Jung became a member of a fraternity (known as Zofingia) and had become a powerful member because of his physical stature, his imposing intellect and his abundant passion. He was particularly passionate about the phenomenon included under the umbrella of *spiritualism*, and it was the literature in this area he immersed himself in long before anything to do with psychiatry. His psychology mentors at the time were found in the psychology literature of figures who were quite taken by spirit phenomena (occult, spiritism, parapsychology, etc.). Jung gave a series of lectures. In one (May 1897), he distinguished between consciousness and "soul." He indicated that "the soul of the human being exists far beyond consciousness," and that "the soul is an intelligence independent of space and time." He argued that the intelligence of this realm beyond consciousness was a higher intelligence with capacities beyond consciousness. As others have noted (especially Richard Capobianco), Jung here gives his first articulation of the basic idea that would inform his life's work.

But not without some injurious detours. As he took up his position at Burghözli, he devoured the psychiatric literature. By the time he had published his dissertation to become a medical doctor (1902), Jung abandoned his Zofingia ideas, in favor of seeing all such phenomena as *dissociated* from consciousness and *pathological*. This I believe is the early ground for Jung's later comment (1911) of "being wounded by one's own arrows." He did this to himself. And in that comment he refers to *introversion*. What has introversion got to do with this?

Jung introduced the concept of introversion in 1910. He followed Freud's view that this inward turning of libido was pathological but observed that this introversion led to "a loosening up of the historical layers of the unconscious." He felt this was in part responsible for his colleague Honegger's suicide and spoke of the "perilous formations that come to light." Here we see the full sense of wounding of oneself by one's own arrows, signifying introversion.

Freud considered introversion pathological because it turned energy away from the demands of "real" life. He said of such inner experiences that they were "nothing other than carefully cultivated daydreams." No matter how rich the material of these inner states (e.g., the impressive images of psychotics), they were always simply expressions of repressed childhood conflicts. Freud questioned Jung's interest in some further meaning of these fantasies beyond the obvious.

But Jung had found something that I believe reintegrated his earlier passion of the Zofingia days, telling Freud that his interest was turning more and more to these fantasies, which he said were an amazing witches' brew and calling them the "matrix of the mind." You can hear the echo of Zofingia. Freud rejected *everything* Jung said about the value and significance of unconscious fantasies of introversion, emphasizing again that they were only pathological. Here I believe is the wounding experience in full view. The energy of introversion must be converted and re-directed toward reality. I believe it is this absolute negation of Jung's position that is the breaking point between the two men and the key to Jung's return to his Zofingia passion, to turn inward, and to eventually (in 1913) lead to the experiences that produced inner events recounted and pictured in the *Red Book*. These gave rise to his major works which are evidence of the degree to which he was healed by what came of his wounding, and what came to be his capacities to heal others, namely, by connecting them to *their* soul. It is the contact with soul in this sense that heals, while the "doctor" (or others) serves to activate the path to soul.