

Rix Weaver – A Final Interview

INTERVIEWED BY LESLIE STEIN

M. I. Rix Weaver died on the last day of the Australian winter, 31 August 1990 at the age of 87. She was, for more than three decades, the core around which Australian analysts gathered. She truly represented the 'old school' of Zurich-trained analysts.

She studied in Zurich between 1950 and 1953, where she analysed with Lilliane Frey-Rohn and Professor C. A. Meier before returning to Perth from Zurich in 1954 to practise as an analyst and, with Jung's blessing, to begin the Analytical Psychology Club of Western Australia. She kept her international links intact as a member of IAAP, her application supported by Marie-Louise von Franz, James Kirsch and James Hillman. She returned to Zurich in 1955 for Jung's 80th birthday and had significant analytical sessions with von Franz and, as well, a session with Jung, the details of which she published in the work: *C. G. Jung, Emma Jung and Toni Wolff: A Collection of Remembrances* (ed. F. Jensen, Analytical Psych Club of San Francisco).

Rix was born in Western Australia in 1902 and in the 1920s was a school-teacher and farmer's wife. In 1940, she published the first of three novels in the 'Behold New Holland' series depicting the lives of Western Australian pioneers. In the late 1940s, before she made the decision to go to Zurich, she lived in London and was a graphology expert whose evidence was often sought in court proceedings.

In Perth, Rix wrote the classic study of Active Imagination: *Old Wise Woman* in 1964 and a Jungian interpretation of Herman Hesse's writing: *Spinning on a Dream Thread* in 1977. Among her published articles was a contribution to *A Testament to the Wilderness* (Lapis Press, 1985) to honour C. A. Meier on his 80th birthday. In fact, she continued to write until several

months before her death, producing *The Ginkgo Tree* and the film *Book in Stone*.

She had a lifelong interest, not generally known, in Sufism. She began in 1981 by studying Ismail Bursevi's translation and commentary on the 'Fusus al-Hikam' of Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi, with a teacher who had studied with Bulent Rauf. She later went on retreat for six months to reread the Fusus. She had Ibn 'Arabi's *Kernel of the Kernel* by her bedside when she died.

To list her accomplishments does little to convey her impact on Jungian psychology in Australia. She inaugurated the Australian New Zealand Society for Jungian Analysts and was its President for 10 years. For 36 years she nurtured, trained, developed and progressed analysts and analysands throughout the country, sending many to Zurich for further training. Perth became a frequent stop for analysts from around the world who paused for her company.

Rix Weaver expressed herself from, as she called it, the place of mystery. She became the Old Wise Woman and a most powerful influence on the lives of so many Australians.

This interview was conducted over several days immediately prior to her death. After it was completed, the night before she died, she asked me to hold it back for ten years before it was sent for publication.

LS: What role has Sufism had in your life?

It has not been in my life for a large part of it but it seems to me to have had an effect on everything. Jung used to speak of his work as being 'double bottomed'; in other words, if you look lower and lower, you will see more and more. In Sufism, I found that lower part, which explained Jung to me from how Jung saw it; not from how we read it but from the way Jung looked at it. This gave me a different point of view, sometimes a very great difference in the point of view.

LS: Can you give me an example of what you saw from that point of view?

That is a very difficult thing to do because it's very subtle, but what it did absolutely was clarify areas that are slightly mystifying in Jungian psychology and it covered those areas so widely. That is all I want to say.

LS: What did Jung know about Sufism?

Jung didn't know Sufism. I have enquired mainly from Marie-Louise von

Franz who said he did not. He did write a paper, a very short paper in 1929, but there was very little Sufi work translated at that time. Sufi papers by Ibn 'Arabi, for instance, were hidden away. They were kept in Turkey and were only brought out once a year for people who were then able to translate them. Jung knew about them – but he didn't know a lot. He had not studied the writings. I remember though that he met Corbin at one of the Eranos meetings and Corbin is reported to have asked Jung: 'would you mind if I used Jungian Psychology to explain Sufism' and Jung replied: 'certainly not'. So Jung knew that this Sufi work was going on.

Sometimes when you are reading Ibn 'Arabi, you come to passages and you think Jung wrote that and then the same thing happens when you read Jung – that is absolutely one of Ibn 'Arabi's thoughts. They are so very much alike.

LS: You have next to your bedside 'Arabi's *Kernel of the Kernel*. What does it say to you?

The *Kernel of the Kernel* is the word of truth. It sums it all up beautifully, if you can sum up truth. I cannot say any more than that really. Its a book that lives with you, you think back on it, you cannot read the *Kernel* and just say 'Well I've read the Kernel' because it is one that asks you to come back again and again.

LS: What is the importance in Sufism of 'naming' things?

Everything in the world is named but we do not know the name of everything. It is not the name given by society. The naming is separating out and at the same time all is going to the one. For instance, a glass is separate from the water but there is one water, one glass. The naming goes much deeper, because the meaning given in Arabic has a deeper meaning of the existence, the value, and the primary role of that particular thing so that you know from that word or name what it actually means. In the particular Sufi sense, it means that everything is important, it is a distinguishing thing. Even an individual grain of sand is important. It is all part of the whole. It cannot just be dismissed because there is nothing outside of God. If there was anything beyond God there would be an opposing God. He would not be God at all. But there is nothing outside, nothing above, below, before or after.

LS: What did Jung mean when asked if he believed in God, when he responded 'I know'.

Sufism really taught me the difference between knowing and believing. We can read a thing or be taught a thing and it makes a lot of sense to us and we believe that is the truth. But somehow, when it happens to you, you know what the truth really is and nobody can tell you any different – it would not matter how much they tried. So I know what he meant when he said ‘I know’ because he had experienced God in his own psyche.

When I was studying Ibn ‘Arabi, and of course if I study something I go into it rather strongly, I was walking along – I remember the exact spot – and it suddenly hit me that here I am and I am thinking with my heart. It almost seemed as though the world literally turned upside down and that was the feeling it gave me. Everything was different: everything was not as it was. Yet, of course, it was from an outside point of view but I had perceived the difference between the thoughts that come from the heart and the thoughts that are manufactured by the head and, of course, Jung did too. Jung very much knew that.

LS: Is this realisation related directly to individuation?

Individuation, I think for me, has always been that one does not become a good person or a bad person – one becomes exactly what one was meant to be. It is that you fulfil yourself in that you find out who you are, what you can do. This is why people are encouraged by the analyst that if you feel you can do it, do it, unless it was something very negative when you would stop it. So in action they do discover who they are, what they can do, their capacity and those are very important things for individuation. To me that is individuation: to become what you were meant to be.

LS: And how does being individuated help one die?

Well that is a very difficult question. Individuation is becoming oneself. As you come towards old age, the individual begins to see the travelling away from life. I have often said that we walk in two worlds at the same time: we walk in the eternal truth, and we walk in this expression of our image of eternal truth, and it is as if as you grow old you are losing little bits of the latter. You know you are losing them. Things are becoming not unimportant. They are important in their own time and in their own way but they no longer are a drag on you so it is as if one’s whole body, one’s whole being, is preparing for death.

LS: What does it mean, then, to prepare for death?

I am preparing for death. It’s not an easy thing. One looks at the things one is here and we also know that there is something beyond it: that this is a preparation for something further, and I do not know how one could say they are preparing for death because I would think one just does. We must not run away from just accepting death as the final act of life.

I was thinking of a beautiful Siamese cat we had that was very old and had lived a wonderful life and one day he said, no more food, thank you. He went and lay down under some shrubs and was determined to be there but we brought him back and made him a comfortable bed because we knew he was dying, but he got up and went again out under the stars and out in the night dews. And again we brought him in, but no, he went out and then we knew that was what he really wanted and we left him there and that is where he died. Now I think that is natural death. One knows, then, their time has come and one is prepared to go, but for most of us, I think, we are in the emotional aspects of the human being: we live in this world and we cling on to it rather than let it go. It’s important to be able to say: yes, it has been pretty good but I can surrender to something that is greater.

LS: Have you let go?

Yes, I think I have. I think of this a lot. There must be some part of me that is hanging on to this manifest world that I do not know about. I’ve been watching this but I have found – of course I wasn’t expecting to be here this long – that each day has brought something that is necessary for me to do or to answer in some way. I feel that I will go the moment it is right for the self, the created God, the great unknowable, and when its right in time, for we cannot get out of time, we must not get out of time or fight against it so one just has to surrender to it.

LS: What about fear or anxiety?

Fear of the unknown? No. With me there is no fear because I have a certainty that beyond this is a continuation – not that I will be in person – I do not expect that, but I certainly expect that it will be a continuation. I think the real me is consciousness, not body, and consciousness cannot be killed or die and that is the divine aspect of man and if men realised there is the divine aspect in him, his consciousness, he would be very very much more careful about handling his conscious growth.

LS: Have you been having any dreams about dying?

Not recently. About 12 months ago I had a dream in which I was walking on a highway which was full of traffic, real buzzing life, and I stepped off it because it was too much and I stepped to the side, to the left, and it was just wild bush, just bushland. I walked a little way through this and came to a place that led me into a lane. The lane had high trees on either side rather like an old place with hedgerows, which have been cut down and shaped. I walked along between those, it seemed a very long way, and when I got to the end I found it was a cul-de-sac. I could not go any further and I looked over the top and I found that there was a beautiful house there. I knew then that I would have to find a way to get through this fence to get there. The dream spoke to me of having to approach the end of my journey. I spoke about it to (a Zurich Analyst) and he agreed with me that it was a dream of approaching death, but it had no time on it. It could be now, it could be in 12 years.

There is another one. Do you want me to tell another one.

LS: Yes, please.

This was later. I was on the south side of the Swan River looking over towards Perth and I realised that all the people who had ever been in my family, and all their families, had all gone to live in Leederville (a working-class suburb near Perth – ed.). I have no connection with Leederville at all and in this connection I thought they were all dead but yet they were all living in Leederville. That did not strike me as being strange in the dream. I walked up a hill along the riverside and up over an incline, which was rather steep, and when I got to the top, there were pine trees growing very thick. Through the pine trees was a beautiful old church, a really lovely old church with water falling from between the bricks. The bricks looked to me as though they were getting in a very unsafe state. I walked around looking at it and thought, yes, this must be finished before I go to Leederville.

LS: What did you make of that?

That I still had not finished with life and that there was more for me to do before I went, and, as I was in my 88th year, I thought that wasn't too bad.

LS: What about the soul in that dream?

The soul is everywhere. I will tell you a dream I had about it. I was in a place which was no place because there was nothing – just my bit of consciousness. I saw the world being created with all the different parts coming together and

making the different stars and planets and so forth and this was in a very quick flash with everything happening. After that I was on the beach at Wonga in Far North Queensland, on Wonga Beach, and I noticed that the waves were coming in, and at the top of each wave was the most beautiful blue of the mountain blue butterfly, which is an unusual and very penetrating blue. The blue tops of the waves suddenly broke away from the waves and came walking up the beach and there were people all in blue. Now I cannot tell you exactly what colour they were but it seemed to be just a mass of blue. They were very busy and they had a roll of something that they rolled upon the beach, like a roll of dress material and they rose up and then one turned to me and said: 'we are creating soul'. I thought at the time in my dream that this is very much different from only the anima or animus or possibly those only represent a fraction of what it is. I awakened and realised from that dream we are everyday creating soul. We are, whatever we are doing, everywhere we are thinking, we are putting something in to that eternal stream which I think is the soul of man. This is why I prize consciousness so much and what I learnt from it. They want to put me on to drugs but I won't have them because I do not want to affect consciousness. I would like to die conscious as I am going. I feel that that is the soul. That is the part that is leaving and that is the part that has to get used to being separated from a body because it belongs to the great body, the great unity of wholeness.

[Ed: Rix sent this dream to Marie-Louise von Franz with these comments:

'I feel that *man* is the isthmus between the Known and Unknown especially the Perfect Man whose heart can embrace both. A while ago I had the following experience. I had been on a Sufi retreat – that set out by Ibn 'Arabi. Many things came to me such as Life being independent of living and dying . . . that psyche is a living substance . . . etc. One day when I was not thinking of these things I was, as it were, taken out of this physical world – I knew my nothingness. I was then aware of a dream-like state in which I entered the *batin* (the interior, the Eternal). Immediately I was aware that the *batin* and the *zahir* (the Manifest, Temporal) were *one* and indivisible. It was an extraordinary experience. One *thinks* of two worlds – the inner and the outer, the archetype and its mirror image – but to *experience* it as an *event* is unforgettable, unexplainable. It is as if one had known *about* something and now *knew*. I did not mention that all became pure light which was the most amazing experience of light being the living reality. Since that experience I seem to have been mentally aware of things on a deeper level.'

Apparently, von Franz responded as to the dream 'You already know what it means. I don't need to make any comment.']

LS: What does the daily struggle over relationships, money, place in the world, and self esteem, add to soul making?

It does. We learn from our experiences. Once you have had the experience, you cannot not have it. So it is all within consciousness. One physicist said we are but luminosities swimming in the greater psyche and I think that is a very good explanation of what we are. We are carrying out the things we have to do and we seem to be separate but we are not separate, we are connected with everything else. This became very clear to me in recent months of how un-separated we are. We belong to the unity. We are on this planet as expressions or manifestations of the One. We belong only in the One and I think this is where we are travelling, what our individual consciousness brings us to is ultimately the soul and that belongs in the eternal realm.

LS: Why do only certain people have these insights?

I have wondered about that. If you say some people inherited something from their parents, I do not think that is the answer. God is forever creating. All kinds of categories are being created at a certain point in time. That creation has behind it the whole of everything from the beginning in its psyche, but sometimes there are people who never get to realise that they are really soul as well as body. They do not give any reality to it. This is, in some of the modern psychologies, what Jung called a 'psychology without a psyche'. Some people go to an analyst to get rid of psychological pain and that perhaps gets healed – probably unfortunately gets healed – because one does not go any deeper into it and does not try to discover who one is and why these things are so. It seems to me, if I can put it this way, that some people are younger than others, some people are born – I do not know if there's reincarnation or not – but maybe there are younger and older cells which are seeking expression. You know within yourself. From your childhood, there is this wanting to know on a deeper level and the things that are on the insubstantial level do not interest you.

My mother was a very great reader of philosophies and had books that were far beyond me as a child and I knew the wondrous things in those books. I remember a man coming to the door with some little books, which he wanted to sell to her and she was saying 'no thank you, no thank you' and he was laying down the law and he said 'you must know these truths because in

the last the rivers turn to blood'. I must have been about four and I considered this very horrible thing but my mother's attitude was that she was not interested. My mother did not want to know about the blood so I did not want to know about it either because we looked for something better than that.

LS: Can Jungian analysis be effective with highly disturbed people ?

Indeed it can. I think it has a very remarkable place because disturbed people are people who have not yet found or do not have a meaning for their lives. Their lives are just meaningless; they get up and do such and such every day and the whole thing goes round and round and round and they get very tired of it. The people who really cannot bear it, want to go further and want to know what it is all about, why am I here. Those are the important things to ask, to ask a question: who am I, what am I, and what is my connection with a whole thing? Do I have any purpose in this whole manifestation? They may come to realise that every grain of sand in the Sahara is important to the Sahara because if it was lost, it would be a terrible thing for the Sahara. I remember Jung saying once something I could not understand at the time. He said 'it matters to me tremendously what is happening to some people in darkest Africa' and it does because we are connected with everything.

Those with a pathology can follow Jung and get better from it; from what their pathology was. In Jungian psychology, it used to be said that it is for the second part of life. But it is for any part of life because look at the things young people go through today. They have gone through things that in Jung's time would be very rare for people to run up against and so we are looking at a different stage of psychic growth

LS: Can analysis be used if a person is unlikely to find no more than a better way to function? Is that enough?

Yes, that can be enough and that if the person is happy with that, they go away with what they were wanting and they are very pleased. There was a story I have been told about two men in Zurich who came over from America and they both chose to go to different analysts – one went to a Freudian and one went to a Jungian. At the end of 12 months, they met again to have lunch because the one who had the Freudian analyst was going back to America. He said to the other 'Well, I've gotten rid of a lot of difficulties and I am going back to start again'. The Jungian replied: 'I am just waking up to the realisation of the depth of my difficulties'. The Freudian said: 'Well, you see, I've lost my demons but with them unfortunately, I've lost my angels'. There is

such a thing as taking an analysis lightly and finishing it off; that is quite remarkable. But also there is among Jungians, in particular, those who feel called, almost pushed; as we used to say: 'he has you by the forelock' and I think Jung gets you by the forelock too.

LS: [The Indian Philosopher] Sri Aurobindo stated that consciousness is not an ascent but rather a descent into the body.

That is right. Consciousness is growth both ways. You have to get inside yourself to discover what consciousness is. You cannot discover it out there, it's just not possible, and you have to get inside yourself and descend into yourself. This is why there must be a descent. There is an aspect to consciousness that knows the beauties of life and that sort of thing but one has to descend into all the pitfalls. Ibn 'Arabi wrote on that and said that one really has to try to lose consciousness to find out how the animal feels. This was his experiment and he said it was extraordinary because the animal could not ask for anything, it could not get something off the shelf itself, it had four legs or two legs depending on what sort of animal it was, it had no way of doing anything and therefore its consciousness was a different sort of consciousness from man who had everything at his command. In this experiment, Ibn 'Arabi said try to get to a stage where you cannot think and you are just in the body – you are just there – you are nothing and then you'll find out the depth of oneself.

LS: You have often spoken of the 'New Physics'. What interest does it hold for you?

It did affect me a lot. I really should have been a physicist! Subatomic physics touches truth. When Quarks were discovered, the effect on me was miraculous because I always had a sort of inner knowledge that matter was not real. How can I put it: the great big rock sitting there in the garden, year after year for centuries, millions of years, does not appear to have any consciousness, does not have any life. What, then, is this thing? When you get to subatomic physics, you find that the rock is in perpetual movement, although you could sit there and watch it for five thousand years and it would look the same. Yet it would not be quite the same but it would look the same, so this is where it really got to me: the realm of continuity and discontinuity. The Quarks are too small, you cannot see them and you cannot hear them, and you cannot feel them, yet you can see the effects from them. It is happening around you all the time. A flower makes a bud and it begins to open its petals, by a process

of discontinuity and continuity. In a split second it blooms. You cannot imagine in how small a time it makes that move to the next step of what it is going to be. Each step has to be made with everything we are handling and these are the sort of things that made me look at it and love it.

LS: Is consciousness truly evolutionary? Does it go forward and take the race forward?

It is, I am sure. If people become more conscious then the whole world becomes conscious. In a limited way, people started to become conscious about this planet and we have 'greenies' who have sprung up everywhere. Just a few years ago, who would have thought of 'greenies' in power (as they are in Tasmania).

LS: What is the role taken by the shadow in dying?

This is rather a deep question. Shadow actually, of its own volition, does not do anything. But people can get very shadowy in the way of dying, in the way of possessiveness. It depends. Every individual goes through something that is quite unique in regard to dying whether it is your own death or somebody else's. You can find a family that is quite amicable and suddenly gets disturbed because something might have been left to one that another one wanted. Up comes the shadow. Instead of accepting that this is what that person wanted, and leave it at that, they get all shadowy.

LS: Can one tell how a person will die based on the pattern of their life?

It feels to me as if it's very much like your life. You either just take it in your stride or you complain about it. It depends. But that is not always true either. I knew a lady who used to complain about everything and she just sat down in her rocking chair and died. So you see she didn't complain. So that is not right either. I do not know the answer to that.

LS: Is there a place for analysis when someone is dying ?

I suppose you can be in analysis any time in life. For me, I like to be left alone to think through things, take my own shots and take my own pleasures from what I am thinking. But I do not know if it is like that for everyone. You see, if you are analysing until you die, you would be analysing on a psyche that is very quickly changing. Jung was always looking for something in his psyche when he was dying and he eventually got a message, which he was very

pleased about. I think that was the message of the stone: you have fulfilled or completed your life or something like that. And he felt that it was right for him to go. I do think you can get things like that and the unconscious goes with them.

LS: Do you mean there is a time when there is no more digging required?

You do not have to dig. No, you've finished. God rules the other side and then you start digging back here. Perhaps you should better go on to the other side and start digging back here.

LS: What is the effect of an analyst dying on analysands?

The analyst has part of his soul, a part he would not share with anyone else, and having shared your soul, you have given away the most intimate part of yourself, and therefore one feels that has been taken away from you. I remember one analyst saying to me in London that one has to be careful with whom one shares one's soul. You must choose the right analyst, otherwise you can feel a great diffidence about it. But I think when you do, you have really deposited with an analyst a lot of your most secret thoughts and attitudes that you feel that part of you has gone and that person was in a way a recorder of it.

LS: How did your interest in Active Imagination develop?

Well it seemed to be my way of going about things. I used to have some dreams and my analyst told me I think you should better start some active imagination on one of those dreams and I said 'oh yes' but I would not. This went on for some time, so she got a little bit anxious and she said: 'I think you really should do some active imagination'. I said I would, so I had a dream of a horse that leapt into a flame. It seemed to be a flame coming up from a great hollow and I knew nothing about the story of Elijah and the flame of fire and the horse, but anyway I did the active imagination and it was so frightening because I rode the horse into the flame and it frightened Dr Fry. She said that is too quickly into the unconscious because it is the burning fire and so she referred the dream to Jung. He thought it over and said: 'I think she's healthy enough to take it'. So nobody stopped me going ahead and I became very interested in where does the unconscious go, where it would lead one. That is how I became interested.

LS: Have you changed your views of the role and importance of Active Imagination since you wrote the *Old Wise Woman*?

The many many things that are practised today are called active imagination, but they are not really there. They are a sort of creative imagination but it is the imagination of the analyst. For instance, somebody dreams of a beautiful flower. The analyst says 'Let's have a look at that. Now the flower is opening and now so and so and now so and so' and they take you on this wonderful journey; you get to somewhere you would never have got to by yourself. This is not active imagination. Active imagination must really come from the unconscious without intervention. You may be looking at an image for weeks and nothing happens, nothing happens at all. That is when you learn patience and suddenly the whole thing takes off and you find yourself deeply involved in active imagination. The first thing is patience, the second thing is credibility to the unconscious to trust oneself to the unconscious psyche and not question it. We are a bit inclined in consciousness to say 'Oh, I just imagined that'. Of course you did. But then who is the imaginary and the imagining of it. Whatever it is you imagine, it springs from the unconscious. It is still your imagination and that is the beauty of it.

LS: How does sand play work in with active imagination?

Very well actually. A boy came to me when he was quite a little fellow and he had difficulties with his brothers and sisters. I thought, well, the only thing to do is give him sand play. I did not know how to treat this child. I gave him the sand play tray and he set off with great enthusiasm. Well, he was so enthusiastic that I bought more little toys and more little horses and soldiers and all sorts of things. The boy moved the sand aside and made a river, he made a big embankment out of one side and had the soldiers and things that were there all lying in wait. I could not get him to come over to the other side of the river at all. He didn't like that, the guns were on that side. One day his father came in with his brother, who was older than the little boy, and the older one rushed in and moved things about. The little boy looked at him and the tears were in his eyes. He could not believe that this was his world the way he saw it and his brother was tearing it down. I said to the father: 'There's your trouble, this little boy is not allowed to be himself. He's got older brothers and everyone's telling him what to do'. So the father was very good about it and he made a sand play tray for the boy so that he could always have the things he wanted and a room was set in the home and nobody interfered with what he was doing. What he created, he let him destroy himself and

nobody else must do it. He came through fine. Better than you could imagine.

LS: What is the effect of the Aboriginal culture on the Australian psyche?

You cannot be in a primitive man's country without being affected by his psyche because his psyche goes back and relives the early times. We have no re-enactment of the ritual of life but he does, and that is very very strong. One can look sometimes at the Aborigines and think how foolish they are. They are worried about a Waygl that once went across the site of the road and whether the road goes underneath or over, does it matter? (Perth Aborigines protested about a new development on the basis that it would disturb the Waygl, the dreaming serpent – ed.). That is the part of the Waygl one accepts, that it springs up here and there. If they really knew Aboriginal culture, they would know that it is not a foolishness on their part but it is their desperate attempt, against very difficult odds, to get a part of their soul's story accepted. It is like a person in any religion would want the hero of that religion acceptable and these Waygl's were very much the centre of the Aboriginal culture because they lay down the path of life. They meant so much, in so many ways, that you just could not take it from them. It has been in the psyche for hundreds and thousands of years and you cannot suddenly say that it does not exist. A lot of white people never get near enough to the Aborigines to know and I did not as a child either. As I grew older, I did because I had a little girl who had Aboriginal nurses and they were wonderful people, but this leads back to your question how does it affect today's population.

LS: Do you ever see this emerge in analysis?

Oh yes. I did once on my own. In Switzerland, I had a dream that a little Aboriginal boy came to me. I was in a party of people who were going forward to go to a wedding party and this little boy broke into the ranks and pulled on my skirt and said: 'Please come, please come' and I said: 'No. Go away' and he wanted me to come, but I would not go. Now that was a terrible thing to do to a primitive aspect of the psyche, which was trying to emerge and engage me and it worried me quite a lot, so I did an active imagination. I was doing active imagination at the time and I turned towards him and we were out in the desert, and he was laughing and playing around, because they have marvellous laughter, those Aboriginal children, and he put grass together to make a fire and I said: 'You cannot make a fire because I've got to

get back to see my other active imagination which was concerned with keeping the eternal fire going'. I had to always be there to put certain wood on the fire and to gather it and to keep it going as an eternal fire. Now he just sat down, took up a couple of stones or flints or whatever and rubbed them together like this, very very thoroughly and said: 'There, that is it, there's fire'. Now we didn't say any more about it, but it taught me a lot. It taught me that I was trying to keep the spirit alive artificially when really it is in everything we do and it gave me the first inkling of spiritualizing matter rather than materializing it.

I have come across Aboriginal Motifs in analysis but when an analyst uses Aboriginal motifs, I am a bit inclined to distrust them because I do not think there is a direct connection. I might be quite wrong and people are getting nearer to it, but to me it never seems quite right. Aboriginal art is very very advanced in the way that they have developed. Every stroke is meaningful. If we try to make things that look like it, what meaning are we putting into it? But they put their ritual belief into it as they paint it. If you are trying to get to know the unconscious in the Aboriginal way of living, of sharing, it will come to you as it comes to the Aborigines. To just go and watch them and say 'Ah, that is the way its done', is of no use. Jung once pointed out that an old man painted a mandala and people came and said: 'Oh, that is wonderful – so that is what it is. That is the secret of the mandala'. Now he said that they didn't get anything out of it at all because they had missed the fact that the old man was in the mandala and this is what we are inclined to miss when going through Aboriginal stuff. They are in it. We come from the outside. We have got to go through the process and those few that are genuine and will go through the process will do a lot of good, but a lot of people just think its pretty smart to be on the Aboriginal bandwagon at the moment.

LS: How can you let go to die?

Well I suppose lots of things are very ingrained. It is my understanding that this world is a manifestation of the essence of reality behind it and it never can be destroyed. I also know that one gets rather attached to being where one is used to being, and in some ways you're giving up something when you're moving away from that and saying to yourself that I have no ties in this world. When you say that, you'll find your foot is still stuck in the mud somewhere – you cannot pull it out right away. That has been my experience.

LS: How does one extricate itself?

I am hoping I will know very shortly. It is exactly the same story I think. I think it happens to most people. People say to you I want to die, but why aren't they dying? Well I think there is a resistance to dying. You see if they really want to die they could take their own lives. You get so used to this material world even though there are certain things in it we do not like and we feel we do not want to live through all of this. But we are still stuck here somehow, somewhere. The great secret is being able to say, well, I surrender. God, accept my surrender and those inconsistencies that will not surrender, please accept them all so that one can free oneself from them.

LS: I would like to explore with you what that resistance really is?

I wish I knew, Les. I do wish I knew it. Not a fear of the unknown. One can have a very good relationship to the unknown, if that is possible. I really do not know what holds one back. It's not fear – in some cases it is fear – but not all cases.

LS: It is outside time and space and being so can it be said to 'do you?'

It does us yes – that is right. This is where doctors try to predict time and that sort of thing and then they find they cannot. There are so many things that are unforeseen. We are always living in a world where there are inconsistencies that we cannot account for the things that happen. They just happen. There are other forces at play. There is the direct interweaving of men's lives. They are all destinies interwoven like a very very fine web and they're so enmeshed that these destinies are so enriched and we do not know sometimes why we are being kept here or sent away because we have not seen the other side of the picture.

I am afraid I am too weak to continue.

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HISTOR

Jung in
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