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Keywords: Sigmund Freud; C.G. Jung; architecture; unconscious; image

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Questioning the dualities of psychoanalysis and architecture: mediating our connection with the material world

Lucy Huskinson[1]

Abstract

While Freudian psychoanalysis and Jungian psychology may seek to go beyond the Cartesian split of body and mind, they draw their own lines of division, splitting the mind into two worlds of ego-conscious and unconscious, each with their own ways of Being and rules of behaviour. Furthermore, they tend to ignore the relevance of the material world for our psychological wellbeing, preferring to focus on interpersonal and intrapersonal human relationships. This essay examines the models of the unconscious put forward by Freud and Jung in relation to the material, non-human environment to reconsider the significance of the built environment for their theories. I conclude that Jung's approach to the built environment is perhaps more defensive or closed-off to the "outside" world than he otherwise suggests in his writings, while Freud's by contrast is potentially more open to it, and probably more than he himself realized or was willing to accept.

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Psychoanalysis as a clinical and academic discipline rarely concerns itself with architecture or to material objects and environments. It is principally concerned with the nonmaterial world of psyche.

The position of psychoanalytic theory in relation to dualistic thought is not clear cut. Freudian psychoanalysis demonstrates that the Cartesian two-world hypothesis which splits the human organism into a mind and body and ascribes to each a different mode of Being, is alien to our everyday experiences of living. According to Freud, life is a negotiation of causal relationships between body and mind, and it is often when we are frustrated in life that we experience this relationship most viscerally through psychosomatic complaints. Nevertheless, Freudian psychoanalysis is often so preoccupied with the workings of the mind that it sometimes appears to forget or to bypass the impact of the body, and as I will argue, also the nonhuman environments we inhabit and dwell in as embodied beings. For Freud, the places we inhabit are themselves psychologically uninteresting and irrelevant to our mental or spiritual lives, even if we were to feel strong emotional attachments to them. If places are mentioned by Freud, they are treated arbitrarily as backdrops to dreams.

While psychoanalysis may seek to go beyond the Cartesian split of body and mind, it draws its own lines of division, splitting the mind

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into two worlds of ego-conscious and unconscious, each with their own ways of Being and rules of behaviour. In this respect, Freud remained wedded to Cartesian dualism in his desire to provide a metapsychology or metaphysical framework for his *praxis.* The psychology of C.G. Jung could be charged similarly. However, Jung's extension of the unconscious world – from the merely personal unconscious proposed by Freud to a collective and autonomous unconscious that seeks purposely to bring humans into harmonious relationship with the cosmos at large – suggests greater scope for uniting body, mind, and the wider non-human environment.

This essay looks more closely at their models of the unconscious in relation to the non-human environment to begin to reconsider the significance of the built environment for their theories. I start with a discussion on the relevance of symbolic imagery more generally before assessing some of their architectural metaphors and self-disclosed personal experiences of architecture. I conclude that Jung's approach to the built environment is perhaps more defensive or closed off to the 'outside' world than he himself suggests in his writings, while Freud's by contrast could be construed as more open to it, and probably more than he himself realized or was willing to accept.

Underlying this discussion are key issues related to dualism, and questions pertaining to the extent to which Freud and Jung seek to *go beyond* dualism. Relationships between individuals and the material world are often considered to be between contrasting realities – between a subjective and embodied consciousness and an objective non-conscious realm outside of it. This raises other issues, such as how we, as humans, respond to this dualistic relationship, and a variety of responses and ideas are often examined in this regard, such as notions of identity and empathy, of oneness and nostalgia, of dominance and exclusion, and so on. While psychoanalytic theory tends to promote human consciousness while denying autonomy and animation to a life of things beyond and outside of it, I am keen to challenge this characterisation of psychoanalysis by exploring the extent to which Freud and Jung grant autonomous agency to buildings, or indeed to any object in – for want of a better term – the *external world.*

While both Freud and Jung maintain that within each of us is an unconscious agent, which often acts contrary to our will, Freud and Jung have contrasting views about the nature of this 'Other' personality which has implications for their respective positions in relation to dualistic thought. On the one hand, Freud tends to regard this agent as a derivative of split-off aspects of the familiar self – an aspect that was once known by the conscious personality and can *again* be known with careful scrutiny. Jung, on the other hand, grants it greater autonomy as something wholly other, unknowable, and out of our control. The difference between their approaches is not as simplistic as this, but this kind of crude distinction between the two underpins many commentaries of their thought. And it helps to perpetuate the idea that Freud's notion of the psyche is a self-enclosed mind, ruled by a conscious ego that rationalises what is and what is not meaningful or valuable in its experiences, and by the same token, the idea that the Jungian psyche is wholly open to the world or cosmos at large. I wish to question these distinctions first by elaborating on their theoretical differences in relation to the power of images before elaborating on these differences in relation to their respective considerations of architectural images.

Unconscious images

According to both Freud and Jung, the unconscious expresses itself through non-rational thoughts, feelings, images, and symbolic narratives, such as dreams, artworks, psychosomatic symptoms, religious rituals, and myths. But

the way they treat this unconscious language is very different. According to Freud, it can and ought to be decoded and translated into rational terms. He believed psychoanalysis can see behind the unconscious image to the 'real' or latent meaning that's been disguised by the image. Freud wants to strip the image of its illogical nature and use its meanings to broaden the perspective of the rational ego. In this respect, the unconscious Other in you is simply a part of you that you had forgotten, and all images and symbols are simply signs of repressed, mainly sexual content that you have once experienced and can recall again to memory with careful analysis. In Freud's world, the 'Other' is simply your projection of an aspect of yourself that has been split off from conscious awareness and is experienced as a powerful – or 'uncanny' as Freud puts it – external entity.[2]

Jung thought Freud's approach to the Other was far too reductive. For Jung the unconscious Other does not involve only repressed personal experiences but wholly new experiences too. Jung distinguishes between a personal unconscious – which is akin to Freud's notion of the unconscious but with less emphasis on sexual content – and an autonomous and collective unconscious, which imparts to each of us new instinctual patterns of being, which are common to all humans, and which we *all* have the potential to experience.[3] An experience of the autonomous, collective unconscious is just as powerful and moving as an experience of the return of repressed contents that originate in the personal unconscious. While Freud describes an experience of the latter as "uncanny" [*das Unheimliche*] Jung characterises an experience of the autonomous unconscious as "numinous", which is to say, a religious experience.[4] Importantly, for Jung, the symbols and images conveyed by the autonomous unconscious are fully meaningful in their manifest content. They do not signify another meaning outside of themselves. From the perspective of the conscious ego, they are unknowable in themselves and cannot be fully understood.

For Freud, the Other that dwells in you signifies your failure to integrate your past experiences. For Jung, it expresses the presence of psyche or what Jungians refer to as *anima mundi* or 'soul of the world'. Crucially for Jung, psyche is not identified with your 'mind' but the world or cosmos at large. In this respect, he says, "all individual psyches are identical with each other", and "function as if they were one and undivided". But "it does not follow" from this, he says, that the essence of things "is one and the same [inside]and outside of your experiences, as it were".[5] From a psychological perspective, we may experience mere similarities between the two and not an essential unity. Ultimately, he says, the question cannot be decided by psychology, but "by parapsychology [and] psi phenomena".[6] But, despite this concession, Jung was very interested in the ways that anima mundi – as a unified totality, or transcendental embrace of all things – had become personally psychologised and experienced. He maintained that while the anima mundi expressed itself in images that were shaped by individuals and cultures, the animation and transformative power they conveyed were at the same time somehow inherent in the matter, patterns, and substances of the natural and material world at large.

According to the renowned American archetypal psychologist, James Hillman, Jung's historical importance lies in his treatment of our experience of things and in Jung's rediscovery of images as autonomous, numinous, or

[2]Freud, "The 'uncanny'," 217–56.
[3]Jung, "Psychological foundations," pars. 588–9.
[4]See for instance, Jung, "Psychology and religion," par. 6; Jung, "Answer to Job," par. 556.
[5]Jung, "Letter to Stephen Abrams."
[6]*Ibid.*

divine. Hillman celebrates Jung for reversing the tendency that had gained momentum in the year 787 at the council of Nicaea to downgrade the power of images, and which, later, at the council of Constantinople in the year 868, had effectively reduced the power of soul to its rational component. Hillman asserts that from a psychological perspective, the Nicene distinction between the adoration and veneration of images established a pattern of granting greater importance to the rational ego over the autonomous unconscious. By deciding to regard images as representations and allegorical illustrations rather than manifestations of the numinous or divine, the Church Fathers presaged the Kantian split between the noumenal and the phenomenal realms.[7]

Thus, for Jung, the autonomous activity of the psyche reveals itself through images, and these images are often experienced as emotionally charged symbols, as having a mysterious or stirring quality. The powerful impact of images is enhanced, he claims, by their tendency to manifest themselves to individuals and throughout cultures in personified forms – which is to say, as monstrous or benevolent figures that are relatable, but which evade full rational comprehension.[8] According to Jung, these figures are the very basis and primary material of psychic life. Gods, goddesses, demons, spirits, and other symbolic or mythical figures are not the inventions of uneducated minds, he says, but are fundamental structures of being, prior to any attempt to project them. Jung calls them archetypes. He notes, "Instead of deriving the mythical figures from our psychic conditions, we must derive our psychic conditions from these figures".[9] In Hillman's words, "[…] we can never be certain whether we imagine them, or they imagine us. All we know is that we cannot imagine without them; they are preconditions of our imagination. If we invent them, then we invent them according to the patterns they lay down".[10]

Personifying the unconscious as people, but what of nonhuman things?

In Jungian psychology archetypal figures of the unconscious are personified in human or animal form, which is to suggest that the 'Other' in me is a conglomerate of human and animal personalities. But what of the non-human world in which we dwell? What of our built environments and the buildings we visit, live in and work in? Can the soul of the world dwell there too? Can architecture be archetypal and a personification of the unconscious as well? The building we call home would seem a particularly powerful symbol in this regard. It contains us both physically and psychologically. As Andrew Ballantyne, an architectural historian notes, "the building we call home has witnessed our indignities and embarrassments, as well as the face we want to show the outside word," it has "seen us at our worst." Translated into Jungian terms, our homes are fully aware of our attempts to project our personas into the world, our idealised sense of self, as well as our shadow-selves that we would rather keep hidden. Ballantyne continues to note that despite this the building we call home still "protects us, so we feel secure there, and have surprisingly strong feelings for it, even though they go unnoticed most of the time".[11] Buildings can be particularly evocative. We continue to occupy our former homes even though we are not physically present within them. Likewise, our former homes continue to occupy our imagi-

[7] Avens, "Toward a poetic psychology."
[8] See for instance, Jung, *Psychological Types,* par. 78; cf. 77.
[9] Jung, "The spirit Mercurius," par.299; cf. Jung, *Aion,* par. 4.
[10] Hillman, *Revisioning Psychology,* 151.
[11] Ballantyne, *Architecture,* 17.

nation. As the philosopher, Gaston Bachelard suggests, "dwelling-places of the past remain in us for all time [...] Over and beyond our memories, the house we were born in is physically inscribed in us [even] the feel of the tiniest latch has remained in our hands".[12] In similar terms to Bachelard's, the psychologist, Christopher Bollas equates the building we call home with the "nooks and crannies of parts of ourselves" and "nesting places for our imagination". He goes on to consider uncanny repercussions of our intimate identifications with our former homes:

> Our belief in ghosts will always be at least unconsciously authorised by the fact that we shall always linger on in our former homes, just as we assume that upon moving into a new dwelling, its former inhabitants will also still be there.[13]

The links between our psyche, imagination, and the buildings we inhabit are powerful. But Jung seems surprising disinterested in their relationship. Jung is keen to explore connections between psyche and the world, but it would seem that his exploration does not extend to the evocative nature of the built environment.

In the 1960s, Harold Searles concluded that psychoanalysts haven't got the time to consider the significance of the built environment or other nonhuman objects, given, as he puts it, the "pressing importance" of interpersonal relations between people.[14] But the failure to consider the role of buildings and cities in our psychological lives, he asserts, leads to ridiculous conclusions – as though we *live our lives*, he says, "in a vacuum" against "a background devoid of form, colour, and substance".[15] In the 1980s, the Jungian psychologist Joseph Redfearn suggested this failure indicates a deep resistance at work, to accepting the primordial idea that buildings are somehow animated and 'alive'; that they have 'soul'. But this idea is not, he says, as most psychoanalysts like to believe, "a peculiar" religious idea "that Stone Age people follow", instead, it is "a basic truth about ourselves and the real world which we all need to re-learn".[16] Then, in the 1990s, James Hillman calls us to embrace "soul" in all things, in, he says, "things of nature and man-made things of the street". "Our soul life takes place", he says, "on highways in traffic, in houses [...] in malls and airports, [and] in open offices".[17]

Hillman, Redfearn and Searles represent a small sample of clinicians and theorists from schools of thought linked to psychoanalysis (collectively known as 'depth psychology') who recognise at different levels the significance of the built environment as a site of mediation for the soul of the world. And although Jung and Freud do not address this issue explicitly in their writings, I am keen to include them both within this group for reasons I will now explain.

Architectural metaphors of being in the world

A good place to start is with their architectural metaphors of the psyche. Freud and Jung are part of a long tradition of thinkers who employ spatial metaphors of houses to convey aspects of human being and behaviour. They imagine the psyche as a building of several stories. While the rooms above ground level (which are most frequently used and inhabited) represent the dwelling of ego-consciousness, the darker

[12] Bachelard, *La poetique,* 6, 14.
[13] Bollas, *Architecture,* 29.
[14] Searles, *Non-human Environment,* 25.
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] Redfearn, *When are Things Persons,* 215-17
[17] Hillman, "Anima Mundi," 96, 101.

rooms below ground level that are rarely used (other than to store forgotten possessions) represent the dwelling place of the unconscious. Jung's metaphorical house of psyche is given an additional storey underground, depicted as lower basement rooms, which in contrast to Freud's opens the house to the primordial secrets of the ground on which the whole house sits – its archetypal foundations. [18] Although well-documented, their spatial metaphors are construed as abstract diagrams to illustrate the interconnected parts of the psyche.[19] But they convey too, the phenomenological character of buildings – of the experiences we have as inhabitants of the various rooms and the impact these spaces have on us. Subsequently, they can convey psychological and existential truths about the various ways we interact with the material world, and potentially also ourselves.

As we might expect, Freud's use of architectural imagery leads us to imagine a building – and by extension also ourselves – as a self-enclosed mind, inhabiting an environment of unresolved conflict. Jung's use of architectural imagery, by contrast, is more suggestive of an expansive dwelling place that opens to a wider world or habitat. I wish to suggest however, that these characterisations are not so clear-cut, and that Jung's house of psyche is perhaps more enclosed and defensive in response to all that resides outside it, while Freud's is more open than we might otherwise assume. This suggestion is, I think, more interesting in respect to Freud's model of the psyche. For in Freud's writings, we find significant allusions to the built environment that suggests it can lead us to discover ourselves in relation to the soul of the world. It is unlikely that Freud himself would endorse such a reading, but it can nevertheless be tentatively traced in his descriptions about his interactions with the built environment.[20]

Freud initially employed his metaphor of house as psyche to explain the relationship between his patients' dreams of buildings and their psychosomatic symptoms. He concludes, for instance, that dreams of muddy streets point to problematic intestines, while dreams which have been stimulated by problematic teeth will conjure up images of large entrance-halls with high, vaulted roofs, for these large, contained spaces, he says, correspond to the oral cavity.[21] Given that Freud associates the unconscious with repressed sexual instincts, it's unsurprising that he tends to reduce architectural imagery

[18] Jung elaborates on his metaphor in his 1934 essay, "Review of Complex Theory" where he describes the felt-affects of the complex as an intruder who breaks into a house through the basement rooms, causing great disruption to the residents. His idea is that the ego experiences the complex as a sudden and unexpected intruder that violates the safety and self-containment of its familiar space. The intrusion originates in the unconscious part of the psyche. Incidentally, the philosopher Gaston Bachelard in his famous book *The Poetics of Space* from 1957, talks about this example from Jung's writing but as he does so he accidentally mixes up the rooms in his discussion and places the intruder in the attic rooms of the house. Consequently, the error leads to the mistaken conclusion that the complex originates in the realm of consciousness and not the unconscious. For more details, see Huskinson "Housing complexes."

[19] See Huskinson, *Architecture,* 22-63 for a full description and analysis of their various architectural metaphors.

[20] Their contrasting approaches are foreshadowed in the ancient idea of the Memory Palace and its different uses as either a rhetorical device to recall ideas or meditation aid to acquire new, divine truths. For instance, in ancient Rome, when a rhetorician or orator needed to give a long speech that required them to remember many ideas in their correct sequence, they would often employ a method known as the 'Art of Memory'. This method involved the person imagining themselves taking a walk around a building or city street. Inside each room or urban space, they imagined themselves placing a specific idea that they needed to recall in their speech. Later, when they wanted to recall the ideas in a specific sequence, they retraced their imaginary steps around the building or street, encountering each idea they placed there along their imaginary walk. For detailed analysis and overview of memory palaces and their use see Frances Yates' celebrated work, *The Art of Memory*.

[21] Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams,* 157

to representations of male and female genitalia. "Narrow spaces", "steep passages", "locked and opened doors", "cupboards", "hollow objects", and "vessels of all kinds", he says, convey the vagina or uterus; while "steps", "ladders", and 'staircases', are "unquestionably" "symbols of copulation [for] we come to the top of them in a series of rhythmical movements and with increasing breathlessness". "Smooth walls over which [one] climbs and, the facades of houses", he says, correspond to "erect human bodies", and "window-sills" and "balconies" on houses are projected "female breasts". And on he goes.[22]

Freud's approach to architectural analogies chimes with the wider tendency in nineteenth century Europe to diagnose urban spaces as places of neurotic disorders and mental illness in contrast to idealised rural environments as places of health and healing. Agoraphobia and claustrophobia, for example, were new and popular diagnoses at the time, which can be traced historically to the sudden and massive increase in urban developments in industrial Europe, that saw cities emerge and grow at an alarming and unprecedented rate, eating into the rural landscape. This led to immense feelings of bewilderment in rural and urban communities. Agoraphobia, meaning fear of the city, is an anxiety of open spaces and of large buildings that dwarf the individual, swallowing it up into the fabric of the city, and it is a phobia that Freud is thought to have suffered, with reports of occasions when he would start to shake and feel overwhelmed when having to cross large, busy streets.[23]

In contrast to Freud, buildings and urban spaces for Jung are often associated to feelings of excitement at the prospect of new theoretical discoveries and enrichments of personality.

Jung draws on a variety of architectural images to describe his theories and reflections on his own psychological development. Interestingly, he does so most often at the point of a personal discovery or theoretical breakthrough – although he seems wholly unaware of this curious coincidence. For instance, when he reports of his dream of dark and dirty city streets of a place he calls 'Liverpool' (not to be identified with the real city of Liverpool in England), organised in a circular arrangement around a lotus tree in the middle of a plaza at the centre of the city, he informs his readers that the dream image of this city led him to realise the significance of the archetypal Self at the centre or heart of the psyche.[24] And he would come to have many other powerful and impressionable dreams of imaginary buildings – such as a new wing or annexe to his house that he would explore, or a new library room that he was previously unaware of. These dream-buildings would literally house the creative and purposive energy that directed Jung's conceptual world and affirmation of his being in the world. For example, he tells us he had a series of dreams of an unknown building or wing that was built on the side of his familiar house, which contained the unconscious anticipations of his theoretical work.[25] And he suggests that the psychological problems of the union of opposites and of Christ were found within rooms of this large wing and within a vast hall or reception room for spirits.[26] On another occasion Jung tells us that this dream-wing to his

[22] *Ibid.* 124, 471-4, 492.

[23] Theodor Reik, a prominent psychoanalyst and one of Freud's first students, recounts how, while walking with Freud one evening in Vienna, Freud hesitated before crossing a street, and proceeded to take Reik's arm. He then confessed that he was afraid of his agoraphobic symptoms returning. Reik thought that Freud's experience of agoraphobia influenced Freud's choice of career. (See Reik, *Listening,* 15-16.)

[24] Jung, *Memories,* 223-4.

[25] Jung, "Approaching the unconscious," 40.

[26] Jung, *Memories,* 240-1.

[27] *Ibid.* 228

house anticipated his discovering of alchemy.[27] And a dream of a seventeenth-century manor house of grand proportions and many annexes and out-buildings was described by him as "*the crucial* dream anticipating my encounter with alchemy"[28]. Although Jung is aware of the creative processes at work in his dreams, he does not allude to the architectural dream-images as integral to them. In Jungian terms, we could argue that these dream-buildings are evidence of the archetypal energy of the built environment and a veritable dwelling place for the soul of the world. Their presence indicated to Jung the presence of previously unconscious ideas and aspects of his wider personality and the creative activity of the autonomous unconscious acting through him.

But it is in Jung's discussion of his role as architect in the design and construction of his house, or 'tower' located in Bollingen, near Zurich, that we have Jung's most explicit recognition of architecture as a site for soul in the world. He dedicates a whole chapter to the tower in his pseudo autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1961), where he describes how his engagement with the building – through its design and construction – led him to discover his deeper sense of self. "Only after [it was built], he says, "did I see how all the parts fitted together and that a meaningful form had resulted: a symbol of psychic wholeness".[29] The building, he says, is nothing short of his whole self in stone, of his dwelling in the soul of the world. Despite this recognition, the archetypal psychologist, James Hillman – who I mentioned earlier as a keen advocate for the built environment as place for psyche and soul – presents a deeply critical voice to Jung's attempts to engage with the soul through his building. Hillman disagrees with Jung's conclusions and likens the Bollingen tower, not to the *whole self* in stone, but to a dangerous place of separation as a *neurotic ego* in stone, which seeks self-isolation, and wants to separate itself from the world and position itself *outside* it. Hillman regarded Jung's psychology as stuck within dualistic confines, as conveying the psyche as a self-enclosed mind. Hillman himself sought to explode these dualistic confines and to resituate psyche in the world at large. Jung's Tower as an expression of Jungian psychology is, Hillman says, a "monument in stone to the self-enclosed ego" that imprisons Jung within its walls. "We are really in a strange place inside [Jung's] tower". It reveals Jung has a "self-enclosed stone-walled personality".[30]

According to Hillman, Jung's tower is a problematic structure that magnifies Jung's desire to enclose himself in an impenetrable defensive structure that isolates him from life outside. And this is a problem that Hillman associates with modern architecture generally, especially the high-rise blocks and skyscrapers of New York City and Chicago: all of which express, he says, a "walled off individualism, the disease of [...] the twentieth century". "Instead of *connecting,* they are now *excluding*". They accentuate our separation from the soul of the world rather our participation within it.[31]

In the final part of the discussion, I want to return to Freud and examine him walking around the built environment. I wish to focus on an example taken from his own written report of the occasion he visited the ruins of the Acropolis in Athens in 1904. Freud himself finds the occasion interesting because, as he explains, when he observed the ruined ancient buildings before him, he suddenly became aware of a series of desires and memories that had up until that point been dormant and repressed within him. I find the occasion interesting for other reasons. While Freud is only interested in the

[28] *Ibid.*
[29] Jung, *Memories,* 252.
[30] Hillman, "*TOWER,*" section 6.
[31] *Ibid.* section 5.

sexually repressed content of his experience, I think the occasion reveals how his memories and desires were triggered by the built environment itself, and subsequently, that his mind is not as self-enclosed and preoccupied with his infantile past as Freud makes out. In my reading of the event, the occasion suggests that Freud is beginning, albeit tentatively, to open his mind to the soul of the world.

I mentioned that Freud characterises an experience of the unconscious, of the Other in me, as uncanny. The uncanny, from the German *Ünheimlich* – commonly translated into English as 'unhomely', or of not being at home with oneself – is an experience of something both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time.[32] It is an experience of the return of the repressed. And he uses his experiences of the built environment to illustrate this. He describes, for instance, an occasion when he found himself lost and bewildered in the deserted streets of an Italian town. Although he encountered familiar landmarks as he walked around the town, he kept returning to them, as if walking continuously in a circle, unable to get his proper bearings on the place. Another example he gives is of wandering about a dark and unfamiliar room, searching for the light switch, but colliding time after time with the same piece of furniture.[33] These kinds of experiences convey how we are not in complete control of our environments, and how they seem instead to control us.

While Freud's agenda is to examine uncanny experiences to arrive at the origins of repressed experiences and to make sense of the ego's failure to manage them, my interests lie in the evocative qualities of uncanny environments that trigger, for Freud at least, the return of the repressed. In this respect, I am keen to reconsider Freud's characterisation of the unconscious to make it seem a little less self-enclosed, and more open to soul of the world. In other words, in the examples I just cited, I am more curious about the architectural features of the Italian town that led to Freud's uncanny encounter. For instance, did its winding cobbled streets, and its haphazard alignment of features that jut out from the twists and turns of Freud's pathway, play a role in his interpretation of his experiences, and the formulation of his theory that resulted from his reflections on them? I imagine they did.

Freud's report on his visit in 1904 to the Acropolis is useful in its capacity to highlight the different emphases that Freud's psychoanalytic approach gives to the significance of the built environment compared to my own interests in its features. He recounts his visit several years later in 1936 in the essay 'A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis'. As the title suggests, Freud seeks to explain an uncanny experience he had there of being greeted suddenly by a surprising thought. He writes, 'I stood on the Acropolis and cast my eyes around upon the landscape, a surprising thought suddenly entered my mind: "So all this really *does* exist, just as we learnt at school!" '.[34] Freud exclaims: ' "By the evidence of my senses I am now standing on the Acropolis, but I cannot believe it' ".[35] The rest of Freud's account is his attempt to unravel the mystery that lies behind his disbelief in the Acropolis that he perceives. He goes on to diagnose his experience as the return of repressed feelings he harboured towards his father, and the dawning realisation that he has fi-

[32] In his analysis of the term, Freud defines the uncanny as "unconcealed", "unhidden", and "un-secret", and he cites the words of philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling to describe it as an experience of that which "ought to have remained … secret and hidden but has come to light" (emphasis and ellipses are Freud's). See Freud, "Uncanny," 224.

[33] For both examples see *Ibid.* 237.

[34] Freud, "A disturbance of memory," 240-41.

[35] *Ibid.* 243

nally surpassed his father's authority. I will not go into details about his diagnosis because I am curious about the role of the material features of the Acropolis that Freud perceived just before and during his uncanny experience. Freud barely mentions the place itself, only passing comment on its historical significance. But he does tell us that the impressions of the fragmented building compelled him to imagine how it would have once appeared in its pristine form. Following the contrasting images of the building – in its pristine and now ruined form – Freud recalls other fragmentary ideas of a more personal nature – including memory traces of past experiences related to his schooling and his father that had until that point lain forgotten and repressed.

In my reading of Freud's experience at the Acropolis, Freud identifies with its architectural features – notably, the fragmented and disordered array of architectural textures that he perceives as he moves around the site, including its complex terrain of recognisable shapes, absent or missing features, its eroded and crumbling textures, and its sounds and smells. I suggest that his perceptions of this fragmented landscape and his imagined material features of it provided resources required by Freud to engage with his fragmented reveries of his own antique past. Freud's imaginative perception of the Acropolis evokes within him clusters of associated fragments of ideas, memory traces, and unrealised feelings that had been gathering within him. Their complex arrangement and haphazard juxtapositions resonate with the fragments of marble and crumbling stone around him, with some seemingly positioned at random and others more purposively related and connected. These perceptions encourage a sequence of associated meanings that are poignant to Freud. But the evocative crumbling ruin that he gazes at is wholly irrelevant to his own explanation of the event. So tied up is he in the intra-psychic and interpersonal origins of his experience, that he is unaware of the possible impact of the nonhuman environment that is immediately present before him.

When I imagine Freud walking around the ruins of the Acropolis, I see him walking around another spatial metaphor of the psyche that he describes – not another imagined house, but his well-known archaeological metaphor.[36] In this metaphor the remnants of past ages are unearthed by the archaeologist, a figure whose work corresponds to the psychoanalyst, who similarly exposes repressed meanings by interpreting them in the light and meaning of the current day. The Acropolis presents to Freud the possibility of recalling past experiences as he treads cautiously over broken pieces of stone, and with the help of his guidebook he imaginatively reconstructs the building in his mind, restoring its image to its former pristine condition. And I would like to think the material features of the built landscape somehow impressed upon him various meanings and experiences that he couldn't have thought through by more logical, direct, or conscious means – to produce the ideas which, as Freud maintained, contributed to the formulation of his wider theories. The building seems to have provided him with a containing structure for his reveries, enabling his unconscious material to be configured or shaped in such a way that it can be disclosed to conscious awareness, and subsequently thought through and experienced as personally meaningful.

I end with a poignant quote from Ernest Jones, Freud's colleague and biographer who, speaking of Freud, claimed, "the amber-coloured columns of the Acropolis remained in his memory as the most beautiful sight of his life".[37] This suggests that Freud's perceptions of the *material features* of the Acropolis had a

[36]See Freud, "Heredity and the aetiology of the neuroses."
[37]Jones, *Life and Works,* vol.2, 24.

deep-seated impact on Freud. Perhaps more so than his essay would have us believe.

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