

## When Is the Right Time to Ask the Question? A Modern Story of the Quest for the Holy Grail

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### Abstract

This paper describes the author's personal search for meaning through a series of intimate reflections on physical illness, life crises, dreams, and his own understanding of the Quest for the Holy Grail.

### Keywords

Holy Grail, meaning, Fisher King, Jung, Parsifal, Grail King.

It is a bewildering thing in human life that the thing that causes the greatest fear is the source of the greatest wisdom. One's greatest foolishness is one's biggest stepping stone. No one can become a wise man without being a terrible fool. Through eros one knows the truth, through sin we learn virtue. . . How can man deal with the terrible paradox? He cannot say: "I will commit a sin and then shall I be a saint," or "I will be a fool in order to become a wise man." The question is, what to do when put into a complete impasse. Then the dream says, in the cauldron things are cooked together, and out of the things strange to each other, irreconcilable, something new comes forth. This is obviously the answer to the paradox, the impossible impasse.

—C. G. Jung, 1929.

It dawned on me, not at first but after much study and reflection, that to come from a small village in Texas all the way to Oxford University to talk about King Arthur and Parsifal was, if not audacious, then at least, as J.R.R. Tolkien said when the Hobbit Bilbo Baggins discovered the golden dragon Smaug, a "staggerment."

Neither Arthur nor his knights, it has been said, did any "thinking." That was done for them by Merlin. Medieval people could not think in paradoxes or entertain the ambiguity of opposites. Instead, they thought in magical, linear, and superstitious ways.

It was not my rational thinking function that selected the title *When Is The Right Time to Ask the Question?*, which sounds a bit like a proposition or proposal. Small wonder, then, that I decided to focus on the Grail quest and Parsifal, as in

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Wagner's opera, rather than the Arthurian romances, which resemble germ cells of today's soap operas.

So why did I take this chance, or opportunity, to talk to you about this subject? I find the answer in the following quote from John Steinbeck's *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights*:

"This is beyond understanding," said the king. "You are the wisest man alive. You know what is preparing. Why do you not make a plan to save yourself?"

And Merlin said quietly, "Because I am wise. In the combat between wisdom and feeling, wisdom never wins. I have told you your certain future, my lord, but knowing will not change it by a hair. When the time comes, your feeling will conduct you to your fate." And Merlin bade farewell to the king he had created.

Now, what about the time to ask the question?

The first time is not the right time. It would be too heroic, too mystical. The next time is the right time, provided you have spent the interval in the ordeal of reality and its dark shadows, and have learned the value of failure in contrast to the deadly consequences of heroic triumph, power, achievement, fame, and glory. At last you will be prepared to ask the question and hear the answer. Then the question itself fulfills your quest with miraculous healing.

That idea is the theme of my talk on the Quest for the Holy Grail, the sacred story that each one of us has once upon a time lived, or is fated to live. In a synchronistic way, that very ordeal befell me in the year that I worked on this talk. It is that story that gives me the awareness of how the myth of the Holy Grail and King Arthur's Round Table has a numinous power that heralds in the twenty-first century. After the second millennium of the Christian aion we have come again into a Wasteland, and need redemption lest we slip into a new Dark Age.

By some magical spell the Grail castle was associated with the Wasteland and sorrow of the wounded king. Joseph Campbell wrote that the Wasteland characterizes the times of the world when force rather than love, indoctrination rather than education, and authority rather than experience prevail in the ordering of lives. Today, amidst seductive violence, sex-obsessed movies, television, gulags, the holocaust, concentration camps, torture, dictatorships, the exploitation of science and technology, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and the slaughter of hundreds of millions of soldiers and civilians, the myth of the Quest for the Holy Grail has reawakened and compelling significance for the twenty-first century.

From one point of view, the Grail vessel symbolizes the womb in which the opposites of masculine and feminine are united in a new spiritual creation. To quote Shakespeare, "upon this bank and shoal of time" science stands impotent and traditional religion is bankrupt.

Parsifal, the knight who was a fool or bumpkin, was destined to ask the questions, "To whom is the Grail brought?" and "Who is served by the Grail?" When I started to explore the right time to ask the question I had only an intellectual awareness. It was necessary for me to endure a dreadful fate, like Parsifal's lost years between the time he failed to ask the question and the time when he eventually did. This was the question that was needed to heal King Arthur's

wound, so that he might die and Parsifal become the new Grail King. The barren Wasteland came to life. This is the story of death and renewal, salvation and redemption—the story of eternity.

My own fated journey began on Friday, February 3, 1999, at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco and lasted five months. I was attending the annual meeting of the American College of Psychiatry, whose members are principally elite academics or prominent psychiatrists. They are an elected, distinguished, and exclusive small group (about the number of knights of King Arthur's Round Table) dedicated to education. Like heroic warriors they grant themselves decorations—small, round, blue and white boutonnieres to wear in their lapel buttonholes. I have never been comfortable in the college meetings, like this one held at the elegant Fairmont Hotel on Nob Hill, so why did I feel compelled to attend? Frankly, to get CME (continuing medical education) credits, a requirement for licensure to practice psychiatry. Moreover, San Francisco has a seductive appeal. I had been a professor of psychiatry at the University of California at San Francisco before I moved to Texas.

On the last day of the conference I was required to answer a questionnaire proving my attendance, to be certified by a diploma mailed me. But I never got to the last day, Saturday, February 4, because I skipped out of the Friday afternoon lectures to spend time in the city alone. My wife, Jane, headed for the museums. The last thing she said to me was, "Don't get into any trouble," meaning, keep out of the expensive stores.

As I walked out of the hotel I faced the towering and glorious Grace Cathedral, one block away. At that moment I decided to go to the church and walk the replica of the Chartres Cathedral labyrinth on the floor of the entrance. The bright afternoon sun illuminated the stained glass windows, casting a supernatural colored pattern on the labyrinth. I walked the circuitous path. After reaching the center I started on my way out, when something disastrous happened to me. Suddenly, I was dizzy and weak as my bowels were incontinent. Walking unceremoniously out of the labyrinth, I made my way to the bathroom where I experienced a massive hemorrhage. Awkwardly I made my way, the one block, back to the hotel. Although greatly relieved to get to our room, my hemorrhage became so profuse in the bathroom that I was reminded of a combat hospital. I fantasized that there would be yellow plastic police ribbons marking off a bloody crime scene. Alone, frightened, faint, and almost in shock, I managed to telephone my doctor at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, who told me to get to a hospital emergency room as soon as possible. Just then Jane walked into the room, and saw what had happened. She said our son John was on the way

Unable to reach any of my doctor's friends in San Francisco, I telephoned my dear friend of fifty years in Palo Alto, Dr. Eugene Farber. When I taught at Stanford Medical School, he was chairman of the Department of Dermatology. Within ten minutes he had arranged for a professor of gastroenterology to meet me at the emergency room in Palo Alto. John drove us there in forty-five minutes. Thus began my status as a patient at Stanford Hospital for two months, during which time I received sixteen transfusions, and had a subtotal colectomy (removing almost my entire colon) for bleeding diverticula. While they were about it, they took out my gall bladder also. These procedures were followed by an

abscess and more surgery. By the end of the first month I thought that I was going to die.

This episode was not my first brush with death. When I was an intern in Panama in 1941, I fell ill with acute and moderately far-advanced tuberculosis. At that time, there were no anti-tuberculosis drugs, so I spent one year on bed rest in a sanatorium. I recovered completely within two years. Then in 1991 I had a radical prostatectomy for cancer at Mayo, and in 1995 in emergency triple by-pass operation, also at Mayo, for blocked coronary arteries. During that hospitalization I experienced severe bleeding and ventricular fibrillation. And at midnight on October 24, 1997, Jane woke me up to tell me that our eldest son, Hank, had been killed in an automobile accident on the way to visit his daughter in college. I have been lost in the labyrinth several times.

For months before I went to San Francisco, I had been reading books on the Arthurian legend to prepare myself for this talk and had become deeply identified with Parsifal. For a theme I had decided to focus on the hero myth. Once in the hospital, however, my interest in “the right time to ask the question” evaporated. I read nothing and told my doctor that I was going to cancel my trip to Oxford. He admonished me not to do that. He had hope, but I was unsure if I would survive, if I would be able to travel, or if I would ever know what to talk about. I suppose I was beginning to identify with King Arthur, who had lost hope. Then one day I remembered that the image of the Chartres Cathedral labyrinth was on the cover of my book *Practical Jung: Nuts and Bolts of Jungian Psychotherapy*. Several days later my new book, *How Dreams Help*, arrived at the hospital from Daimon Verlag publishers in Switzerland. On the cover was my own dramatic yarn picture of my dream about the sword Excalibur. The Arthurian myth was returning to confront me.

You will remember that Arthur’s sword, Excalibur, was presented to him by the Lady of the Lake, the anima out of the maternal matrix of the unconscious. The sword and the lance are masculine, aggressive power symbols, having aim, direction, and impact. The lance that wounded Christ on the cross had caused the wounding of the Grail King, but if Parsifal could recover the lance which perpetually bled, and touch Arthur’s wound with it, the wound would miraculously heal. The sword and the lance heal the wounds that they cause. In the Stanford Hospital, surgery that wounded also healed. It is common for doctors to say, “I lanced the abscess.”

In my last few weeks in the hospital, I realized what my problem was in conceptualizing the theme of the story. I had identified with the young knight Parsifal, while now, aged eighty-two, I was suffering with a seemingly incurable wound. I lay helpless on a hospital bed in a single room, waited on, cared for, and treated (“royally”?) by friends, doctors, nurses, wife and children.

After I left the hospital I became confused. Was my identification with King Arthur or the Fisher King? Why were there two Grail kings, two Grail castles? Why were there three heroic knights who would ask the right question—Perceval, Parsifal, and Galahad? Could I weave a simple thread and theme through the various Arthurian legends? Three months later, when my strength and vigor were returning, I was visited by a big dream in which my unconscious showed me that the Fisher King, not Arthur or Parsifal, was the old man from whose perspective I should view the Quest for the Holy Grail.

Neither the Fisher King nor King Arthur had a direct relationship with the Holy Grail, yet it was in King Arthur's castle where the regular Grail ritual was carried on by the beautiful women. To gaze on the Grail enhanced his torment and his wish to die. The Fisher King waited for Perceval to find the Grail and bring the lance. His legend comes from pre-Celtic and pre-Christian times, perhaps from the Neolithic or Bronze Age. The Celtic Arthurian legend of the Holy Grail belongs to the Middle Ages, to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and time of the crusades, when papal authority and the might of the Western Church were at their greatest, and when heresy was beginning to challenge this power.

Let me return to the symbolism of the Chartres labyrinth with the cross, the Christian symbol associated with death and resurrection. At the center of the Chartres labyrinth is a flower, the symbol of the Virgin Mary, the reality of the feminine principle. The labyrinth symbolizes a journey to the center or navel of the world, or to the underworld. It is a rite of initiation in which the initiate loses his or her way, or becomes confused. It is a sacred space within a sacred place, reflecting the conscious return of feminine principles, chivalry and romantic love, into the ruling values of Western culture.

The Grail in the Arthurian legend is a feminine symbol, the treasured vessel in which Joseph of Arimathea received the blood of Christ at the descent from the cross. King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table were worldly, not spiritual, symbols. In fact, Arthur and his knights represented power, triumph, and domination over the barbarian and anti-Christ—the embodiment of conquest and worldly fame.

Remember that nature, the land of King Arthur, lay in waste, but would revive when it was the right time for Parsifal to ask the question. T. S. Eliot wrote his poem *The Wasteland* in 1922, to acknowledge the emptiness of human existence after World War One, when over sixty-five million men answering the call to glory were killed, wounded, or lost. Mustard gas, artillery fire, the cold and wet, starvation and disease incapacitated many others. The cities were ravished.

At the end of the bloody twentieth century we live in a world of disorder, loss of control, the defiance of science, and glorification of technology. It has been said that the coda of the computer is "I have the answer. What is the question?" The problem is that the computer's answers are programmed into the computer by nerds and imaginative, rational thinkers. There is danger in programmed beliefs, like the vows of the knights of the Round Table and the doctrines of the medieval Church. The computer cannot answer Parsifal's questions, even if it were programmed into the software, because there is no answer, only a mysterious religious force or symbol, where the answer is found in death and rebirth—in eternity.

One of the contemporary problems in both the Jungian and the psychoanalytic worlds is the shadow power of rationalization and intellectualization. For example, the simplistic and destructive nature of classification into schools of the imagination, encrusted in the contemporary obsession with "post" things, like "post-Jungian" systemization. The moment we categorize ourselves, we have created a "we" and "them." Our Jungian DSM-IV has been printed. How ridiculous for me to try to classify myself as a classical, archetypal, or developmental Jungian. The moment categories are established, like pigeonholes, we grant other people the "privilege" of classifying ourselves. We are then in the power business,

but knights of which realm? The moral of my talk, you will remember, is that salvation is possible only after enduring a long period in the rough, sordid, and mean reality of the world, streets with no names, and real worlds that do not disappear into the mist of great thoughts, beyond the armchair, the cozy consultation office, and the lecture hall.

A curious example of this approach is the late Joseph Wheelwright, my first Jungian analyst and friend. His extraverted feeling nature had a strong pull toward the Camelot of the Jung he knew, the earthly power of the king and his round table. Jung's great charm and sense of humor enchanted Joe's romantic vision. He once told me that he could say anything in the intellectual world by playing the role of the clown. I was first moved to become a Jungian analyst when Wheelwright showed the wonderful BBC film, *Face-to-Face*, an interview with Jung, at the University of California, San Francisco psychiatric grand rounds in 1967. If you remember, that film begins with a scene of the rippling water of the Lake of Zurich at Bollingen, with the music of Wagner's prelude to his opera *Parsifal*. When candidates became Jungian analysts, Wheelwright would actually congratulate them on being knighted. He said that to me. He said that to both men and women, reflecting his androgynous nature, as in the 1960s when he changed the spelling of his name from JOE to JO.

I might note here that Parsifal did not know his own name, and it was only after King Arthur was healed that the king asked him his name. Then Arthur told Parsifal that his father was Arthur's son, that Arthur was Parsifal's grandfather, and that he would succeed as the new Grail King when Arthur died in three days.

Wolfram von Eschenbach tells us in *Parzifal* (1210) that the Grail is the alchemical stone, *the lapis exilis*—the ordinary stone of little value but treasured by the wise person—or the philosopher's stone, *lapis philosophorum*, and that there was never a man so ill that he was unable to die within a week of seeing it. The stone resurrected the ashes of the burned Phoenix. The stone Grail of alchemy heals the lust for worldly power and the intellectual suppression of eros. The Fisher King was Perceval's uncle.

My long stay in Stanford Hospital involved suffering through a real life-crisis. It is my work with wounded soldiers and sailors from the Korean War, AIDS patients, San Quentin prisoners, psychotic drug children of Haight-Ashbury, and post-traumatic stress victims of Vietnam that allows me to "know the streets." Jung warned that the analyst must learn from actually working in the dark, cruel world, in order to know the psyche. This was Parsifal's five years of living the life of evil, sending King Arthur the sixty knights he had conquered and made prisoners. All this time he had not remembered God, qualifying him for a second chance to discover the castle and ask the question. Parsifal is a more human knight, wrestling individually with the uncertainty of the essential spiritual search, than the pure and perfect Galahad or Perceval.

Why did the invitation to talk at the Guild for Pastoral Psychology evoke in me the myth of the Quest for the Holy Grail? Guilds were a thriving phenomena in the Middle Ages when the Arthurian legend was written. Being asked to speak at Oxford reminded me of my first visit here in 1937, when I was a summer student at the University of Edinburgh, reawakening memories of Britain and Nazi Germany. The invitation at first lighted a spark of conceit of the hero myth. Only later, after I

was brought down by a bleeding lance, did I realize my identity was with the initiation rite, and not the hero of a power myth, neither Arthur nor Galahad.

It is not surprising that two women, Emma Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz, wrote the magnificent volume, *The Grail Legend*, about the fatherless Parsifal who was raised by his mother, and the fatherless knights who, like Parsifal, were warned not to ask questions.

Let me now tell you my dream of the Holy Grail exactly as I wrote it on awakening.

### **Grail Dream—July 14, 1999 (Bastille Day)**

#### *Part One:*

I am at a remote village high in the Swiss Alps. It is sometime in the long ago before the tourists came. I am walking along a narrow ledge high on a mountain and come across a dark metal marker, which says that this is the spot where Harry Wilmer almost fell to his death.

A young woman appears by me. I tell her that clouds and a dense mist hide the scene from this spot, but that it is one of the most spectacular views in the world. Across the valley are seemingly endless Alpine peaks.

An eighty-year-old woman runs by us toward her home nearby. It is also a small shop, and on the second floor I can see a window of her restaurant. We follow her into her place. She is an energetic woman, like many old Swiss who live in the mountains. The house is in an isolated small village. There is snow. I see a rugged old Swiss man who, when asked "What about the women?", replies, "F— 'em."

I am now standing alone outside, A man tells me that I should go to the new retreat created by the Lutherans. He hands me a large, green-colored map of a vast region that has been taken over by the Lutherans. There are many open spaces and scattered forests. A large river runs through the area, beginning at the entrance road and winding among the lakes and forests.

At the far northern part of the river there is a path leading to a large building, like a church or castle in the trees. Below the castle is a lake for fishing. Although at first I thought the castle was the end of the river and path, I see beyond it, farther north, a winding river that flows from a large body of water in which there are about five large, old four-square-masted wooden sailing ships.

The castle church is obviously not the end of the line.

#### *Reflections:*

This dream occurs in ancient times. A positive, energetic and nurturing motherly woman and a crusty curmudgeonly old man appear. Near the place where I once almost fell to my death, a young attractive woman comes to me. I tell her what a fantastic view this would be if it were not hidden by mist and clouds. I am given a large, green-colored map of a forested land, with a winding river and lakes reaching a castle church, from which one could cast a long line into a lake to fish. In the dream, I think the Fisher King lives in this castle. It is obvious that I must journey into the Lutheran land.

*Part Two: (dream continues)*

I cross a highway, which runs through the Swiss village, and on the dirt road leading north there is a small sign, "Lutheran." A key to the entry materializes in my hand. It hangs from a hook on a heavy brass cylindrical handle. There is a second hook but no other key. I walk on accompanied by the young woman who I now know is an American. There are no cars on the road. After a while, we come to a fork in the road. The way to the right has a sign, "Baton Rouge." I think that is the town in Louisiana. We walk on the main road where we encounter some fierce medium-sized dogs that have strange striped markings. I know these are Lion-dogs. I pet the one nearest me who seems friendly, but the other dogs are barking and look dangerous.

Soon we come to a place where the river widens and winds through a dense forest. It is a beautiful sight of wilderness. I can see fish in the river and the lakes as we pass.

*Reflections:*

We are deep into the Lutheran land. The road to Baton Rouge reminds me of my childhood home in nearby New Orleans. Baton Rouge means "red stick or baton," and stands for a power weapon. It is also the location of Louisiana State University. My immediate association is that in August, 1934, while taking the night train from New Orleans to my home in Minneapolis, Minnesota (Land of the Ten Thousand Lakes), at the northern headwaters of the Mississippi River, the train came to a stop for a long time. Shortly before the train arrived, Governor Huey P. Long was assassinated while walking across the rotunda of the capital. Long was a corrupt, terrifying demigod who held the whole state in his hands by bribery, blackmail, and dishonest police. Huey Long was known as the "Kingfish," and his slogan was "Every Man a King." From the train that night I could hear sirens and see flashing red lights of police cars. This scene was the shooting dead of the tyrant, by a man whose family he had ruined.

My astrological sign is Pisces, which seems natural.

In the Fisher King myth, dogs led Perceval to his castle. Luther is associated with the defiance of the Pope and the rigid doctrines of the medieval Church. My dream is getting close to the ancient Fisher King and the castle/church door where Luther nailed his ninety-five theses, in defiance of the Pope when he decreed his power of indulgences. I remind you that King Arthur defied the lords of Rome, who had come to collect tribute at the banquet of his marriage. To quote Tennyson, "No tribute shall we pay. So those great lords/Drew back in wrath, and Arthur strove with Rome" (Tennyson, *Idylls of the King: The Coming of Arthur*, ¶¶512-514).

*Part Three: (dream continues)*

As I approach the castle church, I come upon a shop in an old wooden shack, in which a bumpkin is selling small iron sculptures he has made. I tell the young man to stop making and selling these iron objects, pretending them to be valuable artifacts, and to stop trying to impress people. He is taken aback and reacts as if no one has ever told him the candid truth about his tricksterish behavior.

We come to the large building, where a man is fishing by casting a line far out into the lake, which lies at the bottom of a high cliff by the castle.

I am now in an underground room of the castle with the American woman. It is like a mausoleum and reminds me in the dream of the catacombs of Rome where the Christians were buried. On the top row of the vaults we are facing is a dark metal marker which has the name of LEO engraved on it. In the end, I have in my hands a manuscript of one hundred pages held within a leather folder. It is my story of the Quest for the Holy Grail.

*Reflections:*

The two-key holder with only one key suggests the “Keys to the Kingdom,” implying that there are two (Grail) castles, but only one for me to enter. The lion dogs suggest the hounds of hell, such as Cerberus, the three-headed dog guarding the underworld. My warning to the trickster is to make me aware of my trickster.

In the Grail myth, a dog leads Parsifal to the Fisher King’s castle, and if Parsifal keeps to the right road a beautiful maiden will lead him to a river, where a boat will be waiting to take him to the other side where the Fisher King lives. The dog is an ambivalent animal, both man’s devoted friend with unconditional love and the ferocious wild dog. The wasteland around Camelot was inhabited by wild killer dogs. Incidentally, there is the dogma of the knights of the Round Table, to which they swear an oath before they are knighted, and the doctrinaire dogma of the medieval Church. I looked up “Leo” in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and found that it was Pope Leo X who assumed absolute power to interpret the scripture and dispense indulgences, leading Luther to defy him and to burn the Papal Bull that threatened excommunication and cited canon law. Pope Leo X then excommunicated Luther, and thereby brought about the first break in the unity of the Western Church and its masculine authority. The mausoleum with the marker LEO had reminded me of the catacombs I had seen in the underground of Rome.

As a consequence of the change from super-order and absolute authority to chaos and violence, human individuality and individuation emerged against the collective experience. The dream and my story balance the masculine and feminine, with the Swiss maternal archetype and the American anima companion—my soul. The story unfolds from the place too high from which I almost fell to my death. It is regeneration through an ordeal of transformation, the death of the power principle and birth of a spiritual life. There is a future of the past beyond and north of the Grail church/castle—an eternity.

Let me remind you:

At first, I chose to address the Quest for the Holy Grail from the hero myth of Parsifal as told in the Arthurian legend *Parzifal* by Wolfram von Eschenbach (1210), and not Galahad or Perceval in the myths of Sir Thomas Malory and Chretien de Troyes. Then came a personal violent confrontation with death, which led me to think of the story from the perspective of King Arthur with the wound that would not heal, the king who could not die. Next the dream identified the Fisher King as the Grail King toward whom I was drawn, not Arthur, the warrior king at the time of courtly and romantic love.

The initiation ritual after Parsifal's failure at first chance to ask the question became my theme illustrating the value of failure. When I speak of the value of failure, I refer to learning by our mistakes, our foolishness, or the natural failure which strikes when our reach is too far, too vain, too high and too mighty.

Remember, Parsifal failed to ask the right question because he was a foolish knight, too naive and rather a bumpkin. As a consequence of his failure, the castle and King Arthur and the land disappeared. For the next five years Parsifal led a barbarian life of violence and evil. He did not think of God. Only after this wild adventure in the Wasteland was it the right time to ask the question. The long interlude perpetuated the Wasteland.

In the chaos of the twentieth century, rationalistic and scientific violence, killing, greed, and dictatorial power have appeared in the guise of utopias. Such societies conjure up a Golden Age when there is no need to choose between good and evil, because in their belief or faith, hidden as a great truth, is the all and only good.

Once upon a time there was a moribund kingdom that was redeemed by a knight who had to seek wholeness by adventures in the evil world.

Once upon another time, we who can experience the archetypal roots of life, the Self, must regain our spirituality and overcome our hubris. Then we shall escape a new Dark Age and struggle to overcome the delusion that the Holy Grail is to be found in reason, by way of the contemporary gods of materialism and the overthrow of tradition.

Enlightened individuals must find redemption before we destroy ourselves and all around us. People in their compassion and suffering can cast the light of eternal visions on the looming new Dark Age. The spiritual and wounded Jung and the shadow-wounded Fisher King may be symbolic images for our quest for salvation. If that sounds too grand or ethereal, then, in plain talk, we must learn from our failures and encounters with evil to achieve a renewed freedom from the dark, labyrinthine prisons of our minds.

## Epilogue

On August 11, the night I finished word processing this Guild lecture, my numinous Grail Dream returned with some modifications. A man was thrown to his death from the high mountain trail, where the historic marker in my first dream had indicated the place where Harry Wilmer almost fell to his death. The lake with the fish reappeared, but not the fisherman, so I was the one who would fish. The nurturing, aged, maternal woman was still there to feed us in her small home restaurant, and my anima/soul-companion was with me as I led a small group of Mayo Clinic doctors along the narrow, winding, dangerous Alpine trail. We came to the point where the path turned the mountain edge beyond which the mist and clouds disappeared, and we would see the pristine alpine range. Here I turned back because this was the first day we had been at this high altitude, and were not yet acclimated. We would have to wait for the right time. The knights of Camelot were represented by twentieth-century doctors of a modern shrine of healing, the Mayo Clinic. I had been at Mayo while the two Brothers Mayo were still living inspirations to me (two Grail Kings?). I was impressed that the staff of the Mayo Clinic in this dream met in a large, cloister-like place to have an intellectual dis-

cussion of the arts and humanities, not medicine and surgery. It was the spiritual side of the healing arts. The dream ends with me meditating in the pew of a small, new Protestant church, with the pastor asking me to join the congregation.

My unconscious was affirming that I was truly on a religious quest, returning to Switzerland, where I was analyzed by C. A. Meier in the early 1970s after I had resigned from the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Society because they were too rigidly doctrinaire. The dream says that I have now come to a turning point in my life, but I must first become acclimated and acculturated by the end of my ordeal with my journey to the Guild for Pastoral Psychology.

This dream occurred on the night of the great eclipse when the planets were lined in a cross.

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