

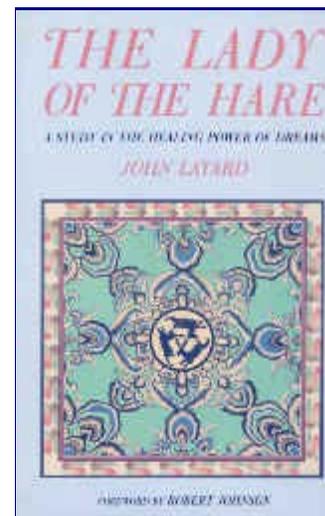
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The Lady of the Hare
A Study of the Healing Power of Dreams
by
John Layard

Foreword by Robert Johnson
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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2003



While reading [A Life of Jung](#), I encountered the name of John Layard as an early student of Carl Jung's. I checked my library and found this book by him. That prompted me to move it to top of my reading list and thus this review. This book was originally published in 1944 and its content is as fresh and interesting as if it had been written last year instead of 60 years ago. Let's start with Layard's amazing definition of Analytical Psychology. Most people say it is Jung's method of analysis, but that is a mere tautology which offers no insight into his method.

[page 17, 18] Psychology is at once a new science and a very old one. It is old in that it seeks to unite the two opposing forces in human nature by means of a third factor, which is that of acceptance by the conscious mind of those primitive contents that form part of our psychic heritage, which if not admitted, operate as negative autonomous complexes, but, when accepted, prove to be the keystone supporting the bridge. It is new in so far as it provides a new technique by means of which this unity may be approached and that which has hitherto been most feared or despised may be thereby transformed into spiritual strength.

This process is by no means antagonistic to religion, and is based on the rediscovery of what I believe to be the universal redemptive process underlying all religions, embracing body as well as spirit in its healing power. We all have in us the constituent elements of salvation The trouble is that many of us don't know it. The aim of Analytical Psychology is to make conscious this salvation process, latent within us all but inoperative till we become receptive enough to perceive it and give it that honour which alone will release it from its prison in the deep caverns of the soul.

Note the difference in thrust between the medical model of Freud's psychoanalysis which strives to find out what is wrong with the psyche and repair it and the salvation model of Jung's analytical psychology which strives to find out what is right with the psyche and help bring it to bear in its own salvation.

[page 22] In other words, to put it briefly, 'Freud employs a reductive method, Jung a prospective one. Freud treats the material analytically, resolving the present into the past, Jung synthetically, building up out of the actual situation towards the future.'
(quoted from Joland Jacobi's "The Psychology of C. G. Jung.")

Someone once summed it up thus: Freud took those at odds with society and helped them fit into society;

Jung took those who fit into society only too well and helped them find their individuality which had been submerged in society.

In the story of the Lady of the Hare, we meet such a woman, Mrs. Wright, the author calls her, and her daughter, Margaret. Her daughter, otherwise outwardly normal, would not speak to anyone but her mother. This led the local vicar to ask Layard if anything could be done to help the 16-year-old daughter, Margaret. It is often found in a family system that the person wielding the symptoms is not the one who needs the help, and that working with any member of the family group can affect a salubrious change in the system. This was a family system of only two, the mother and the daughter, and since the daughter would not speak to anyone but the mother, the choice of a place to start was obvious. Here was his attempt to get the girl to speak:

[page 27] For an hour I tried every device to amuse or interest the daughter, but failed to produce anything more than a monosyllabic 'Yes' or 'No', except on a single occasion when, asked what kinds of books she liked reading, she managed to whisper the words, 'Edgar Wallace'. . . . At the end of an hour it was I who was beaten. Nothing seemed to have touched her, and in despair I went out to confess my utter failure with her mother.

Layard began meeting with Mrs. Wright and out of his work with her dreams, especially the one involving the Hare who willingly sacrificed himself, the daughter was able to lead a normal life. Her dreams are all very insightful and Layard helps the reader enormously by adding drawings which show the layout of the characters in the dream. Here is the dream of the Hare in full.

[page 48, 49] 9. DREAM (*Sacrifice of the Hare*)

'The scene is near my home in Ireland, and I am walking with Margaret up to a square house belonging to a female cousin whom I know very well. The ground was covered with snow. Margaret was in a bit of a fuss wanting to hurry up and get the place dusted, but I told her not to be in such a hurry, as in any case, with the snow lying about, there wouldn't be much dust.

'There was a crowd of people close to the gates, but they didn't come in. As Margaret and I walked up the drive after going through the drive gates the owner of the house appeared, ordering Margaret in rather a bossy way to go into the house to fetch her a glass of lemonade. Margaret went in at the front door to do this, and I never saw her again.

'Then I went round alone into the kitchen at the back of the house. Inside there was a great light and everything was as white as it was outside, though how the snow got in there I cannot tell.

'There were people inside, too, and there, in a white bowl with a little water in it, was a live hare. Someone told me I had got to kill it. This seemed a terrible thing to do, but I had to do it. I picked up the knife (an ordinary kitchen knife) which seemed to have been placed ready for me and which was lying in the water inside the bowl beside the hare, and with a feeling of horror I started cutting into the fur and through to the skin beneath. I had to cut the hare straight down the middle of the back, and started to do this, but my hand trembled so much that, as I cut down, the knife slipped away from the straight line, and ended up by cutting obliquely into the hare's haunch.

'I felt awful doing this, but the hare never moved and did not seem to mind.

'Though the ground outside was covered with snow we had left no footmarks on it.'

Mrs. Wright later told Layard about the look of extreme satisfaction and trust that had been in the hare's eyes as it looked back at her when she plunged the knife into its back. Turns out to Layard's and my surprise there are a plethora of myths in the literature and traditions of many cultures around the world about the hare being a willing sacrifice. Perhaps it stems from the fact that rabbits and hares tend to hide from danger, and thus are the last ones seen running from their hiding places when a field catches fire. We'll take a look at some of the stories about hares and sacrifice later in this review.

In the very next dream (#10) Mrs. Wright reported a man spoke to her over her shoulder and said, "Margaret and her mother may sleep together."

[page 49, 50] Asked why she wept, Mrs. Wright said that, when Margaret was born and during her childhood, she had, in obedience to instructions issued to nurses, stifled her own motherly feelings and refused ever to have her baby in bed with her except when it was ill. She agreed now that this was foolish. I pointed out the wickedness of man with his puny conceit setting up his own rationalizations with regard to infant feeding against the instinctive knowledge implanted in both mothers and babies which leads them to do the right thing by one another if only their instincts are allowed to operate in the way desired by both. I pointed out also the premium placed by this rationalized system on illness, as being the only method left open to a child of forcing its mother to give it that motherly attention which is its due, but of which this system has quite artificially deprived it.

What the dream meant was not necessarily that the mother should now take her 16-year-old daughter into her bed — though there was no reason why she should not do so even now — but its real meaning was a spiritual one, namely that as the mother improved, her own improvement would convey itself automatically to her daughter through the channel of the Collective Unconscious, and the daughter would herself get better.

How many mothers today do the *right thing* — which would be to follow their instincts in matters of child-rearing? Not many is my guess — instead most seem to follow the advice and "puny conceits" of those who advise them that their babies should *not* sleep in the bed with them at all from birth and even dictate whether the baby should sleep on its back rather than its stomach. This human wickedness proceeded from what else? Statistics — which Mark Twain says is third of the kind of lies, following in the succession of wickedness in this order: Lies, Damn Lies, and Statistics. Before statistics, there were motherly instincts and fatherly instincts, which humanity has relied upon much longer than upon the wicked and dehumanizing phenomenon of statistics.

Later, after Mrs. Wright reports Dream 12 (page 54), Layard comments about the dream and we see clearly closely bound Margaret's problem is with her mother.

[page 56] I said, 'Yes, your girl friend whom you wrap round with your garment is your spiritual part whom you are now taking to yourself in the sense meant by a former voice saying that Margaret might henceforth sleep with her mother. As you withdraw this projection into yourself the real Margaret will become free.' She said, 'She is becoming so already. Last week of her own will she kissed her aunty good night for the first time in years.'

The second half of the book deals with the mythology of the hare. Layard uncovers two stories from India that bear repeating, one involving a reverent King of the Elephants and one involving a proud, boastful King of the Lions.

The hares have a favorite watering hole called Moon Lake. A herd of elephants come there to drink and trample the hares. The King of the Hares sends an ambassador to the King of the Elephants who tells the elephants they have defiled the Lake of the Moon God, and the King says, "I must never do so again: I must show my respect for the awe-full moon-god." The ambassador leads the King of the Elephant to the lake and shows him the reflection of the Moon in the Lake, and the King bowed in awe and never returned to the Lake.

[page 117] This tale represents the elephant (earth) as bowing awe-struck before the reflection of the moon which symbolizes intuition. The elephant was wise in that it recognized a superior power.

The next tale involves a Lion who was King of the Forest in that he could eat any animal in the forest and often did. The animals got together and decided to make a deal with the Lion by offering him one animal each day, so that he could be well-fed without having to hunt down the animals. The Lion took the deal, and each day a different animal presented himself and was eaten. When the hare's turn came, he thought to himself, "He is truly brave who does not become bewildered even in the time of calamity, so, now that death stares me in the face, I will devise an expedient." (Page 118) The hare arranges to be late and the Lion is very angry and asks why he is late. The hare explains that he was detained by a bigger and more ferocious lion than the Lion King. This made the Lion King even madder and he demanded to be shown this bigger Lion. The Hare leads the lion to a deep well and as the Lion looks down and sees his reflection, he takes it for a ferocious Lion and roars with all his might. The echo from the sides of the well magnify his roar as it bounces back. The Lion King jumps at the Lion in the well to kill him and drowns.

[page 117] The lion, in another story, was not so wise (as the elephant), but, as the account shows, instead of seeing and honouring the moon, saw only his own reflection and was, in psychological jargon, therefore devoured by his Shadow.

There was a common saying when I was a kid that if someone asked for something too expensive or unattainable, he would be accused of asking for the moon. It might go like this, "You might as well ask for the Man in the Moon!" The ability to see the Man in the Moon is an acculturated ability in the West. In the Eastern cultures, they are conditioned by culture and tradition of seeing a Hare in the Moon.

I remember that fall night in 1975 when I first saw the Man in the Moon. I had always looked at the moon wondering where and how to see the Man in the Moon, and had never done so. At age 35, that was to change. I was driving home along Main Street heading towards the Foxborough Common and a large, golden harvest moon was sailing along ahead of me. I thought about the face of the Man in the Moon on the back of the Squeezers cards popular when I grew up. On rocky knoll two bulldogs, one named Trip and one named Squeezer, were chained to their doghouses and were straining to go after each other. At the bottom of the image is the message, "There is a tie that binds us to our homes." The Man in the Moon was quixotically smiling overhead. As I drove along that night, I thought to myself, "What if the Man in the Moon looks exactly like the one on the back of the [Bulldog Squeezers](#) playing cards?" The instant I said that, a face appeared of the Man in the Moon, and it has remained there to this day. Here was a time that I was asking for the Man in the Moon, and he appeared to me! It was that day that I began to think about the ties that bind me to my home and I pledged to myself to return to South Louisiana from New England as soon as possible.

On pages 119 through 120, Layard relates a tale of Buddha who helps a king who is grieving inconsolably for his dead son. Buddha pretended to be a madman and ran through the city crying, "Give me a hare!" That would be equivalent for someone to run down Broadway yelling, "Give me the man in the moon!" The city was convinced that Buddha had gone mad and told the King he needed to save his brother, Buddha. The King asks him why he cries for a hare, and Buddha tells him, "I crave no hare of earthly kind, but that within the moon." The King advises Buddha that he will die if he asks for the Hare in the Moon, as no one can obtain that. The Buddha, on hearing that, replies to the King, " My brother, you say that if a man prays for the hare in the moon, and cannot get it, he will dies; then why do you mourn for your dead son?" The King was taken aback and listened intently. Buddha continued, "I, brother, pray only for what exists, but you are mourning for what does not exist." The King smiled and said, "Your intent was good, dear one. You did it to take away my trouble." Then the King sang the following five stanzas in praise of Buddha . The last stanza is called "The Stanza of Perfect Wisdom."

***Men had I wise and excellent to give me good advice:
But now hath Buddha opened this day mine eyes.***

***Blazing was I, as when a man pours oil upon a fire;
Thou didst bring water, and didst quench the pain of my desire.***

*Grief for my son, a cruel shaft was lodged within my heart;
Thou hast consoled me for my grief, and taken out the dart.*

*That dart extracted, free from pain, tranquil and calm I keep;
Hearing, O youth, thy words of truth, no more I grieve nor weep.*

*Thus do the merciful, and thus they who are wise indeed:
They free from pain, as Buddha here his eldest brother freed.*

There is a passage that I cannot resist sharing with you, dear Readers, a perhaps private insight by John Layard who was a direct student of Jung:

[page 175] Jung once said that the only divine thing he knew in mankind was humour, by which he meant that joyful sense of the incongruous that joins fact to fiction which is essentially the symbolic aspect of fact. This statement is itself a joke, and not to be taken either as blasphemous or as the final word, but is a symbolic way of indicating that union of opposites which warms the cockles of the heart, whether as secular joke or as the life-giving knowledge of the divine spark in man.

If I may paraphrase, "To laugh is human; to be humorous is divine." Perhaps that is why George Burns and Bob Hope both bumped up against 100-years-old — they were humorous and the Divine blessed them with five score years. Apparently humor is no joke.

Layard lays out for us many more secrets of the hare, such as the Egyptian hieroglyph which means "to be". Here is a list of the features and attributes of the Hare assembled for us. Check how many you are already familiar with:

- 1) The Hare is often a willing sacrifice.**
- 2) Hare are respected as Deities in some areas and cannot be eaten except on special occasions, such as Eostre, whose name is the origin of our word, Easter.**
- 3) The Hare in the Moon association is found from India to North America and leads to its connection with Easter, the great moon-festival, whose date is intimately associated with the Moon, coming on the first Sunday after the first Full Moon after the Spring Equinox in most religions.**
- 4) The Hare is the symbol of Dawn, Easter and the East.**
- 5) The Hare is closely associated with Whiteness and Snow.**
- 6) The Hare is a symbol of Intuition. Appears in many tales of an ingenious rabbit or hare. Brer Rabbit of the Uncle Remus tales is one of recent origin in the South of the United States.**
- 7) The Hare is an omen, most often taken to be a portent of fire.**
- 8) The Hare is associated with picture-writing such as the Egyptian hieroglyphes mentioned earlier.**
- 9) The Hare makes the Elixir of Life.**
- 10) The Hare is a Witch-Animal.**

This list should indicate that the Hare is a special animal indeed, and Mrs. Wright's dream of the sacrificial hare was pulled by her from the depths of the collective unconscious to assist her in the individuation of

herself and her daughter. Layard has done a masterful job pulling together in this book a tasty rabbit stew, into which, no doubt, the rabbit jumped willingly.

