

Pulling an Endless Thread From a Bottomless Well

I spent my early childhood in Bağlum, a little north of Ankara, Turkey. One of my vivid memories from those days is that we used to have a water well in front of our single-storey house. It had a long brown rope in it, and an old metal sunflower oil tin was attached to the end of the rope so you could pull water up with it. Such a nice invention of my grandfather! I remember that I used to look inside the well and fearfully imagined how deep it was. I was afraid of even my own reflection on the water that deep.

Many years later, and thousands of miles away from my hometown, I am now standing in front of a deep well. The tip of a thread hangs out of it. I am starting to pull it from its tip without seeing the end of it but hoping for it. The thread is very thin at first. And as I pull it to myself, it gets thickened and stringy. Even though it seems to be in one piece in my hands, it rubs at the edge of the well on its way out, and its strings fray and get brutally entangled. I know I should get some rest and *weave* these *threads* into a text. And while doing that I should remind myself I am a text(ile) labourer. However, there is an *unbearable lightness* of pulling a thread. As you pull it, you convince yourself to “pull a bit more, just a little bit more”. I am pulling it more as if I am coming to its end, but to no avail.

I think that reading is like this kind of pulling, and writing is weaving the thread that you pulled out from a deep well. I should now look over my shoulder to see how much/many entangled thread(s) I have left. I must meticulously tie their separated tips together, and I must separate the entangled ones in a careful manner. I guess this task could be “a bit!” more difficult than disentangling my mysteriously entangled earphone.

There is no end to the well, and there is also no end of the thread that I take from there. At some points, the thread gets too tight and becomes a rope. And my task becomes more and more burdensome.

I should find a clue. The word clue is “*ip-ucu*” in Turkish, my mother language. Its literal translation is the tip (*ucu*) of a thread (*ip*). I later learned that “clue” etymologically means “a ball of thread”. I really do not know any more where I left my “clue”, the “starting” tip of the thread.

At least I am sure that I don't want to completely let go of the thread that I caught. But if I keep it holding with my both hands, there's a danger of falling into the well with the rope all the way down, to the very deep. Let go of one of my hands and kneel on my knees by doing a little less *pulling* and a little more *weaving*.

“Thread” is an old metaphor that signifies “thought”. And a narrator is a weaver who weaves his/her story with many threads. We’re coming to the end of my story at York. Now the threads pulled out from the well need to be interconnected in a meaningful way.

What was the first question for me when I first came *here*? The question was, *what is it to be human?* In other words, *when we look at our deep well, how can we make sense of our own reflection?* This question still “stands” in my mind with all its magnificence.

I could at least give a metaphorical answer: I believe that a human is a *rope* with a thousand and one ends. Each end is tied to a thousand and one ropes. A single individual is a whole of a larger whole, and also a *particular* partiality. One of the main issues of the discipline of Psychology I am a member of is actually to do justice to the *particular* and the *whole*. In other words, our main duty is to *resolve* the *relationality* of the individual and the whole--to be able to do all this without falling into a deep well. This is to look at the whole from an individual point of view and to look at ourselves from the point of view of the whole at once. As poet Nesimi eloquently says in one of his couplets (rough translation by me):

*Sometimes I go up and contemplate the universe from above,
sometimes I go down to earth and the universe contemplates me.*

We are the ones who contemplate and are contemplated. We are the ones who look into the well and are looked at. Approaching the end of my story, I am trying to turn around myself and figure out if I could find the tip of my rope, and I am trying to look at my own reflection in this bottomless well. I know that neither this reflection nor this story has an end.