

ADVENTURE IN ARCHETYPE



DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY AND
THE HUMANITIES

MARK GREENE, PH.D.

**Volume 1 in the
Essays in Archetype
Series**

**Adventure in Archetype:
Depth Psychology and the Humanities**

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Adventure in Archetype: Depth Psychology and the Humanities
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Cover image: “Alice finding tiny door behind curtain” by Sir John Tenniel in Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865

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Plans for further volumes in the *Essays in Archetype* series include books on the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice and an archetypal look at China and the west using modern and ancient myths to elucidate mutual understanding.



Dedication

For my teachers Carol S. Rupprecht, Steven Liebman, Ross M. Burkhardt and David L. Miller. Each of you taught me your love for images and words. Whether in the realm of the unconscious and dream interpretation, photographing the world, combining lyrics, music and images to create new meaning or teasing out nuances from word and metaphor, there is more than a little of you in me. Thank you for your teaching.

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Preface

This volume comprises a collection of essays written from an archetypal perspective. Archetypal theory refers to one aspect of the work developed by the pioneering psychoanalyst C. G. Jung (1875-1961) and taken further by psychologist James Hillman (1926 -). These theories, or their derivatives, may also appear under other headings such as analytical psychology, archetypal psychology, Jungian psychodynamic theory, depth psychology or, in general terms, a psychology of the unconscious.

Here an archetypal perspective is taken on literature, art, myth, legends and fairy tales to better understand the foremost tenet espoused by both C. G. Jung and Sigmund Freud: the existence of the unconscious mind. These pioneers defined the unconscious as a vibrant, autonomous psychological agency that operates largely out of individual conscious awareness. The organization of this book over three sections is designed to facilitate the reader's understanding of archetypal theory in its application to a variety of exemplar works within the humanities.

If Jung and Freud could agree on the existence of the unconscious, they parted ways with Jung's observation of the existence of the archetypes, which Jung showed "present themselves as ideas and images, like everything else that becomes a content of consciousness" (1958, *CW* 8, para. 435). Jung diverged from Freud due to the former's seminal insight into the nature of the unconscious: at its deepest level, it is collective. Jung refined the concept of archetypes as not "a question of inherited ideas but of inherited possibilities of ideas. Nor are they individual acquisitions but, in the main, common to all, as can be seen from [their] universal occurrence" (1958, *CW* 9i, para. 136). The nature of the archetypes and a sampling of their innumerable manifestations in the arts comprise the scope of this work. Please see this book's *Introduction* for an elaboration of the definition of an archetype.

The most recent developments in neuroscience and cognitive psychology, schools of thought that had previously viewed depth psychology with no small amount of derision, now produce evidenced-based research on a continual basis that largely confirms what Freud and Jung initially intuited about the unconscious mind. Born out and corroborated through their work with individual cases in consultation rooms and psychiatric institutions, Jung and Freud formed their own assessment of the unconscious before the era of neuroimaging (e.g. Functional magnetic resonance imaging [fMRI]; Positron emission tomography [PET]; Single photon emission computed tomography [SPECT] and others). First, we now know for a fact that the so-called *talking cure*, the term commonly used to refer to psychotherapy, therapy or counselling, actually alters neuronal pathways in the brain within a six-month period in much the same way as pharmacological intervention, including SSRI antidepressant medication, has been shown to do. Second, the unconscious *processing*, to borrow a computing analogy, that occurs in the brain extends to a scope even greater than that posited by Freud and Jung. Indeed, our ego-based perspective is beginning to appear flimsy compared to the magnitude, power and raw processing power that characterize the unconscious mind.

One hundred and ten years after the birth of the talking cure, psychoanalytic theory and analytical psychology, mainstream scientists from a variety of disciplines are converging on a point of agreement with exactly what Jung proposed well before World War I: the unconscious comprises an information system designed to deal with an enormity of data, a large part of which is genetically hard wired *a priori* (i.e., present before birth) and capable of

absorbing the nearly infinite number of stimuli experienced by an individual during the lifespan. As such, the conscious mind has been shown to be, in some cases, second in command, so to speak, to the autonomous agency of the unconscious which influences our every waking and sleeping moment. Some consciousness researchers even suggest that our concept of free-will and independent agency are but illusions designed to not bruise our fragile egos. And so, the pendulum of approaches to understanding the mind has now significantly swung back to the realm of the unconscious.

It is hoped that this book will provide readers access and helpful approaches to recognizing and understanding archetypal manifestations not only in the humanities but, by necessary extension, within the psyche of the individual. I believe this is a helpful way of looking at the world and one's own consciousness that allows for possibilities of insight for growth and self-realization. As such, this book can be regarded as an opportunity to familiarize oneself with the application of archetypal theory so as to better understand the creative functioning of the unconscious and provide a solid introduction to the disciplines of depth psychology and the humanities.

Introduction: What is an archetype?

C. G. Jung's legacy is arguably one of the most influential in psychology today. Although the general public may not have the access to the background information necessary to draw this conclusion, many psychologists familiar with psychodynamic methodologies are aware that Jung conceptualized the psychological complex, first defined introverted and extraverted attitudes of consciousness and gave breadth and depth to the notions of persona and shadow. Perhaps his greatest yet least understood contribution to science was fleshing out the concept of the archetype.

An archetype by any other name...

Archetypes are hard to define because they cannot be seen. Instead, apparent to the eye are manifestations of the archetype. One analogy I like to use involves the coins in your pocket. The penny, dollar or yen coin in your hand may look identical to its counterparts. Upon careful examination, however, you will see that no two coins are actually identical due to slight variations embossed at the time of forging and the wear and tear suffered in circulation. The coins, then, in this analogy correspond to archetypal manifestations and the mould deep within your country's mint, the archetype. In this example, the archetype (the mould) has a distinct form and is characterized by its negative space. When the molten metal amalgam is poured into the mould, a new coin is forged bearing a clear resemblance to the 'archetypal' form which birthed it.

John Sanford simplifies: "...to say something is an archetype means it is an essential building block of the personality. Or, to use the word in its adjective form, to say that something is archetypal means that it is 'typical' for all human beings" (1991, p. 59). Steven Walker (1995, p. 4) helps round out the definition of the archetype by saying it "designates an unconscious and unrepresentable element of the instinctual structure of the human psyche". Finally, Anthony Stevens makes an excellent case for the existence of the archetypes in the social sciences under different names. He points out that all cultures contain universals that are distinctly human in expression. In fact, "no human culture is known that lacks laws about property, procedures for settling disputes, rules governing courtship, marriage, and adultery, taboos relating to food and incest, rules of etiquette...the performance of funeral rites, belief in the supernatural, religious rituals, the recital of myths...and so on" (2009, p.15).

"All such universal patterns are evidence of archetypes at work. The point is that what any one of us experiences in life is not determined merely by our personal histories. It is also fundamentally guided by the collective history of the human species as a whole. This collective history is biologically encoded in the collective unconscious, and the code owes its origins to a past so remote as to be shrouded in the primordial mists of evolutionary time" (p. 16). In anthropology, these universally observed and documented patterns of human behavior are called 'cultural universals'. In behavioral biology, the terms used to refer to what Jung calls archetypes are 'innate releasing mechanisms', 'patterns of behavior', 'epigenetic rules' and 'epigenetic pathways'. In psychiatry, we see echoes of the archetype in this language: 'psycho-biological response patterns' and 'deeply homologous neural structures' (Stevens, 2009, pp. 25-26).

Although Jung posited the existence of a countless number of archetypes, he frequently encountered a group of about eight in analyzing his patients: the Persona, Shadow, Anima, Animus, Self, Wise Old Man/Woman and Trickster among others. For Jung, analysis was a necessary context for integrating unconscious material into consciousness. He believed

“we can never legitimately cut loose from our archetypal foundations unless we are prepared to pay the price of a neurosis, any more than we can rid ourselves of our body and its organs without committing suicide. If we cannot deny the archetypes or otherwise neutralize them, we are confronted, at every new stage in the differentiation of consciousness to which civilization attains, with the task of finding a new interpretation appropriate to this stage, in order to connect the life of the past that still exists in us with the life of the present, which threatens to slip away from it” (Jung, 1958, *CW* 9i, para. 267). The essays collected here attempt to find interpretations consistent with our era.

Familiarizing oneself with the concept of archetypes and their myriad manifestations in myths, legends and fairy tales can provide a better understanding of how individual psychology functions. In addition, understanding the concept of the archetype is necessary for appreciating the *archetypal* approach espoused by this book in analyzing examples from the humanities. For this reason, I find it useful to mention how relevant archetypal theory is to both the study of the humanities and contemporary psychology. In the therapy room, a depth psychological perspective informed by the invitation of unconscious content can aid counsellors in recognizing aspects of the client’s psyche that have been unconscious and may actually be responsible for setting in motion or providing a context for those very same principal issues contributing to the client’s presenting problem.

Indeed, as Jonathan Shedler (2010a) documents, recent studies by Allan Abbass (2006) indicate that the pendulum seems to be swinging back to psychodynamic therapies as the intervention of choice for long-lasting positive outcomes in psychotherapy. “Abbass’s meta-analysis [...] looked at patient assessments conducted nine months or more after therapy ended. The effect size grew from 0.97 to 1.51...The continued improvement suggests that psychodynamic therapy sets in motion psychological processes that lead to ongoing change (2010b)”. Jung’s psychodynamic framework in treating psychological disorders takes into account the autonomous agency of the unconscious which would explain an increase of positive therapeutic outcomes over time. For Jung, both conscious and unconscious elements of psyche require exploration and integration for lasting personal growth to occur.

No standard Jungian methodology

C. G. Jung was a kind of Renaissance man in the sense that his erudition and intellectual pursuits covered a wide scope of the medical sciences and humanities, especially philosophy and history. Much like Sigmund Freud and other first generation psychoanalysts, a solid grounding in classicism (which included the ability to read Latin, Greek, French and German, of course, in addition to a high degree of familiarity with Romanic and Hellenic histories, cultures and mythologies) were required of the analyst who hoped to be able to interpret symbols in clients’ dreams against the backdrop of early twentieth century European society. Freud was quite enamoured with Egyptian artefacts and mythology, Otto Rank was a scholar who used biblical stories of the Old Testament to illustrate psychological theories and Jung could have added the appellation of mythologist to a list of his specialities as early as 1911. Not coincidentally, Freud directly referenced *Oedipus Rex*, the 5th century B.C.E. drama set down by Sophocles, when coining the name for what he held to be the most pervasive and influencing tenet of psychoanalytic theory: the oedipal complex.

This brief sketch of the scholarship possessed by just a few representatives of first generation analysts—in addition to the fact that most also held medical degrees—points to the inevitable aura of celebrity that was construed by the public regarding these pioneers of the psychological healing tradition. Seen from the perspective of outcomes-based learning

which characterizes contemporary educational theory, the analyst of yesteryear personified the “sage on the stage” instead of today’s recommended “guide on the side”.

These factors are partially responsible for the fact that Jung did not leave a clear-cut clinical methodology for later generations to adopt and evolve. Instead, the curriculum for the aspiring Jungian analyst was (and continues to be) analysis itself tempered by reading key works of Jung and successors. Working with clients in this atmosphere requires an implicit scholarship to accompany the endeavour that Jung termed the process of individuation. It is no coincidence, then, that the bulk of Jungian scholarship that has followed since Jung’s death in 1961 has been devoted to unpacking, evolving, extrapolating and formulating much needed methodologies that can be adopted by practitioners who may or may not be Jungian analysts (Beebe, 2005; Papadopoulous, 2006; Sharp, 1991; Stein, 1998; Stein, 2010).

The essays in this collection do not attempt to explain archetypes as much as analyze their counterparts: archetypal manifestations. For an excellent lexicon of Jungian terms and concepts, please see Daryl Sharp’s [*Jung Lexicon: A Primer of Terms and Concepts*](#). Happy adventuring!

Part One – Examples from Modernity

1

Eating, Anxiety and Transformation in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

Alice undergoes a variety of transformations in shape and size during her adventures in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Nearly every one of these changes is induced by eating or drinking an item she finds along her journey. These radical changes of bodily shape and size propel Alice into a series of abrupt confrontations with the unfamiliar and oftentimes hostile environment of *Wonderland*. If she gets too big, she will break her neck (Gardner, p. 57); too small, she will disappear altogether (p. 39). Alice questions her identity after two such transformations, "I wonder if I've been changed in the night...if I'm not the same...who in the world am I?" (p. 37). It is "in the night" that children have their nightmares and it is in the darkness (down the rabbit hole) where the unconscious reigns. Psychologically, it is helpful to view *Wonderland* as Carroll's unconscious made topographically manifest.

That the story's first version was composed extemporaneously and conveyed orally by Rev. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson on a rowing expedition in England is not contested. It is perhaps not well known that as he committed the story to paper, "...many fresh ideas, which seemed to grow of themselves upon the original stock" materialized, and that "many more added themselves when, years afterwards, I wrote it all over again for publication..." (Gardner, p. 22). In this sense, the story of Alice is at least partially the direct outcome of an interaction between conscious awareness and apparently autonomous unconscious content that emerged during reverie and upon reflection as if in a daydream.

That Dodgson found friendship with prepubescent girls his whole life and that he found in these relationships a creative outlet for his remarkable imagination is well documented by his diaries and correspondence (Gardner, p. iv-x). Psychologically speaking, it can be assumed that Dodgson may have indeed had an *anima* complex that he was prone to project upon dainty, young girls. Using this psychological approach, the image of Alice, the character, is a symbolical expression of an aspect of Dodgson's *anima* made manifest in fiction. In an added twist, the Alice of daytime consciousness was Dodgson's favorite little girl of all time: Alice Liddel. It was she who was with him in the rowboat the day he created his tale (Gardner, p. 22). In this light, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* emerges psychologically as both a fantasy inspired by a real life *anima* projection (Alice Liddel) and a revealing symbolic landscape where Dodgson's literary *anima* figure is free to dialogue with the other archetypal entities of his own partially unconscious psyche as represented by *Wonderland*.

Those who have interpreted the story from a Freudian perspective focus on Alice's unease. As Paul Schilder (1972) observes, most of Alice's "anxieties are connected with a change of her body" and that "she is never successful when she wants to eat...there is a continuous threat to the integrity of the body in general" (pp. 285-286). Géza Róheim (1972) proposes a "sort of oral tension" permeating the entire story, the first hint of which occurs at the beginning when Alice seizes the empty jar of marmalade while falling down the rabbit hole (p. 334). These Freudian views of Alice enhance a Jungian interpretation by attributing

the specific characteristics of *undernourished* and *frustrated* upon Dodgeson's anima figure made manifest in the character, Alice.

Picture, for a moment, for the sake of contrast, how a more integrated or whole anima image would manifest in *Wonderland*. Perhaps there would be a scene where Alice is sitting under a tree enjoying a picnic with some of the animal creatures she has met. Instead of causing her distress, the act of eating wholesome food satisfies her and is followed by a sleepy feeling descending upon her as she leans against the tree and naps. In napping, she dreams a dream within Dodgeson's dream. A very fertile and creative scenario, this one, where Alice actually and truly eats, digests and transmutes the food substance into spirit as symbolized by the dream. In Dodgeson's actual story, however, Alice is frantic, sometimes histrionic and on the run; she is not getting her fill of contentment.

Marion Woodman (1980, p. 46) writes, "When food is fulfilling emotional needs, satiety is either not recognized or ignored physiologically". To the extent that Alice does not get oral satisfaction, she is empty of a whole range of emotions. Furthermore, she is not integrated within *Wonderland* as her role is one of a stranger seeking passage back to the light of day. From her underworld position, Alice as anima figure is attempting to connect to a bright, adult world, "I do wish they *would* put their heads down! I am so *very* tired of being all alone here!" (Gardner, p. 39). This longing for reunion with the adult world echoes her distracted and bored behavior at the story's outset when she seems poised to enter a hypnogogic state after finding nothing of use in a book without pictures being read by her sister.

In the process of ingesting food, a human being is performing a ritual. Food passes through the mouth downward to be consumed by the *fire* of metabolism found in the stomach. That which rises out of a fire mingles with the air. Alice's desire to eat can be seen as a symbolic attempt to rise up and out of *Wonderland* with all its hellish anxiety. In this way, eating in *Wonderland* represents Dodgeson's attempt to integrate his anima with some semblance of conscious awareness. Joseph Campbell (1990) adds "The world is an ever burning fire of sacrifice into which an inexhaustible sacrifice is being poured. That is the nature of life. We are all an offering into the consuming fire". In this light, Alice is yearning for a sort of communion when she ritualistically eats the little cakes sprinkled throughout *Wonderland*. Marion Woodman expands upon this theme by asserting, "The acceptance or rejection of food is symbolically crucial in all religions. To break bread with the god is to be in communion with him; to be hungry is to be alone, searching and preparing for his advent through purification (p. 104). Of note is the fact that the Eucharist of the Christian church is based on several older myths of the "slain and resurrected god" where the masses rejoiced in the resurrection of their plant or fertility god by feasting (McCabe, 1925/1993, p. 17). Other parallels to Christian symbolism can be found in the twelve transformations Alice undergoes in *Wonderland*, the twelve chapters of the book and Christ's twelve apostles.

According to C. G. Jung, everyone is already on a path of individuation and that integration of unconscious contents into conscious awareness is a crucial step in facilitating this process. By looking at a few of the key symbols of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* archetypally, it would appear that a good part of the autonomous agency of the author's unconscious mind found expression in his literary classic. Although a full-fledged analysis of an individual cannot be undertaken through a sampling of his or her output, looking at aspects of creative work archetypally can shed light on author, epoch and psyche, much as interpreting a person's dream can help enormously in adjusting conscious attitude toward life.

1865, the year *Alice's Adventures* was published, coincides with the onset of modernity as measured by advances in medical treatment (anesthesia), public transportation (in England and France) and the onset of rapid urbanization seen stemming from the crest of the industrial revolution. All of these factors make Dodgeson's contribution to the humanities and, indirectly, archetypal psychology, even more appreciated as a way to understand unconscious processes and the dynamics of psychological growth. His visceral treatment of the act of eating, although drawing from primordial sources, may also be foreshadowing from the 19th century some of the contemporary angst surrounding the ingestion of food, in general, and anorexia and other eating disorders among teenage girls, in particular.

Jung and Freud on Religion: The Numinous versus Neurosis

In understanding Jung's view of religion, one must take into account the religious milieu into which he was born. Jung's maternal grandfather, Samuel Preiswerk, was a "distinguished theologian and Hebraist...a pious and learned man." He was said to have visions and converse with the world of spirits. His second wife, Jung's maternal grandmother, was said to possess the gift of second sight (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 661). It would appear that Jung's maternal ancestors were well acquainted with a dimension beyond the scope of the ordinary five senses. Jung's father was a "modest country pastor" who married the daughter of his professor of Hebrew. It has been suggested that Jung's inability to engage his father in an intellectual examination of religion may have prompted him to "turn his inquiry to other problems beyond the scope of traditional religion" (Ellenberger, 1970, pp. 661-663). Esoteric approaches to celebrating a particular religion often involve the adoption of mysticism the practice of which often revolves around ecstatic experiences as evidenced by the offshoot mystery schools of Kabbalah within Judaism, Sufism within Islam and Tantra within Hinduism and Buddhism to name but a few examples.

During his medical studies, Jung also studied the philosophy of Kant and Schopenhauer. In an interview with Stephen Black of the BBC, Jung attributed his decision to become a psychiatrist to an intuitive flash of insight he experienced upon reading the author's (Krafft-Ebing) introduction to his psychiatry textbook. It was at that moment that Jung "suddenly understood the connection between psychology ... and medical science...it caused me tremendous emotion then...I was overwhelmed by a sudden sort of intuitive understanding" (Jung, 1977, p. 259). With hindsight, it is clear that Jung's subsequent career was spent expanding upon and unifying the connection he experienced existed between the material and spiritual worlds, what some would characterize as the realms of science vs. the existence of a soul.

Freud, on the other hand, made it clear that he was a stranger to religious experience (Scharfenberg, 1988, p. 108). He was forthright in criticizing religion as a "universal obsessional neurosis" and "obsession as an individualized religion" (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 525). By reducing religion to a pathological symptom, Freud distanced himself from the possibility of transcendent experience. Instead of viewing religion as a context for self-reflection and acknowledgment of the divine, he reduced the function of religious ritual to the "taming" of sexual strivings in that it offered "sublimation and solid mooring through the opening up of social relationships, and thus provided fellowship" (Scharfenberg, 1988, p. 111). Clearly, Freud's view of religion was that of a Post-Enlightenment social critic and not that of a participant.

Both Jung and Freud recognized a relation between religion and neurosis. Jung asserted that "among all his patients in the second half of life there is not one whose main problem is not related to his attitude towards religion" (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 714). Freud saw the increase of people fleeing into the "caricature of a private religion" (neurosis) as an indication that religion was no longer able to contribute to the socialization of humanity. He saw the "personal God as psychologically nothing more than an elevated father" figure (Scharfenberg, 1988, p. 111). In his work, *Totem and Taboo*, Freud investigated the possible

psychological motives underpinning what he saw as humanity's need for the expression of repetitive religious ritual.

Jung, however, lent broader psychological understanding to that which is implied by the word religion. In developing his theory of individuation, Jung proposed the existence of universal patterns of thought, or archetypes, which reside in the individual and collective unconscious. Of all the archetypes, that of the Self most closely approximates the divine. "It is at the same time the invisible, unconscious, innermost center of personality, and a psychic totality, as it results from the unification of the conscious and the unconscious" (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 710). For Jung, an inclination toward religious ritual was not pathological. Instead, he saw it as an archetypal expression of an individual's need for the conscious emergence and integration of manifestations of the archetype of the Self. In many rituals and hero myths, Jung saw the retelling of the psychological necessity of separating from 'the mother' where the individual eschews the fantasy temptation of reuniting with undifferentiated unconsciousness. Jung went as far as to say that for most of clients in midlife, adopting a religious attitude (not necessarily a religion) was warranted for a successful outcome in analysis.

Rudolf Otto invented and defined the term *numinous* to mean "a feeling...of the creature's nothingness in the face of its Creator...a *mysterium tremendum*...a feeling of awe and shuddering." Jung borrowed this term and "extended its meaning...by conferring a numinous quality upon the experience of the archetype" (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 724). Jung asserts that embedded within the psyche of each individual is the archetypal imprint of a power tantamount to a divine creator in the form of the Self. By bringing an experience of this archetype into consciousness, the individual can realize an authentic religious experience, one that is not necessarily produced by a misdirected father complex, as Freud suggested.

Freud viewed the present as a direct and unavoidable consequence of the past, one which humanity was compelled to repeat "as an ever new recurrence of the repressed" (Scharfenberg, 1988, p. 121). By basing his criticism of religion on a linear and deterministic model of history, Freud limited the individual's potential to an end-state characterized by the resolution of neurosis but not necessarily marked by psychological maturity. In this sense, Freud may have viewed himself as a sort of modern prophet whose mission it was to liberate humanity from its compulsion to repeat errors.

Jung, on the other hand, was inclined to believe in humanity's ongoing evolution and saw his model of individuation as both a microcosm and a catalyst to this greater, mass process. His transcendent function, inspired by Hegel's dialectic method, posits as *a priori* a force within each of us which lifts the convergence of two opposing forces to a higher level when opposition is resolved into a synthesis (Jung, 1958, *CW* 7, para. 365). To this inherent natural dynamic can easily be ascribed a system of self-guidance akin to a divine presence or numinous internal force.

Jung's analytical psychology embraces a religious point of view in the sense that both the theologian and the analytical psychologist acknowledge the potential for experiencing the *mysterium tremendum* as a motivating force in the psyche of every individual. Indeed, it can easily be argued that most of the world's big seven religions, those founded by an individual, arose from a particularly intense spiritual incident experienced by the respective founder: the Buddha attaining enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, Abraham hearing god tell him he will father the chosen race, Mohammed hearing god's voice in a cave in the desert, Mary being visited by an angel to announce her impregnation by the Holy Spirit, Jesus being baptized by

St. John and Lao Tzu writing the *Tao Te Jing* in a secluded hut before riding off on a ox towards the mountains never to be seen or heard from again.

What intrigued Jung about religion was how its essence and manifestation across cultures was an apparent reflection of an interior psychic entity: the archetype of the Self. Freud, on the other hand, pointed vigorously to religion as evidence of pathology. He too adopted a micro/macro perspective where religion, as a sociological phenomenon, functioned in allegory to an individual's neurosis. For Freud, the essence of the religious experience was a neurotic symptom. For Jung, the motivation for religious experience and behavior pointed to either evidence of the divine or, more likely, a psychological component within all of us, the Self, capable of great insight and wisdom.

When asked if he believed in god in his 85th year, Jung responded, "Now? [Pause] Difficult to answer. I *know*. I don't need to believe. I know" (Jung, 1977, p. 428). Although his answer may appear to reveal his personal ideology, Jung's "I know" may actually be a screen upon which many project their own wish for the existence of a deity and cite Jung as corroboration of their own deeply held beliefs and wishes. For Jung, perhaps, his lifelong personal development may have been motivated by his own personal sense of the *mysterium tremendum*: the numinous experience available to all of us psychologically.

Karma and Archetype: A Teleological Unfolding of Self

In synchronous step with the advent of a western psychology of the unconscious, the 20th, and now, early 21st century have witnessed an enormous influx and integration of eastern philosophy and mysticism into western culture. Evidence of this intellectual cross-pollination can be seen as early as 1875 in New York City with the founding of the Theosophical society, “a small but active international group of occultists who believed in reincarnation as the necessary path to the ultimate, inevitable purification of humanity” (Funk & Wagnells, 2002). Although not directly influenced by Hinduism or Buddhism, modern western science also began to describe the quantum physics underpinning material reality in terms plainly reminiscent of the age-old eastern concept of *maya* which stipulates that “indeed everything (material) other than Brahman, the indescribable Absolute, is an illusion” (Smart, 1976, p. 70). These new western insights were facilitated by Plank’s introduction of a quantum mechanics theory of sub-atomic particle movement in 1900 and Einstein’s special theory of relativity in 1905. In the latter part of the 20th century, the influence of Hinduism, Zen Buddhism and Daoism upon popular western culture in the form of music, television programming and a surge of interest in eastern meditative and martial arts is also readily apparent.

Of all the ideology found in the rich panoply of eastern religions, perhaps it is the doctrine of karma which stands out as the most accessible and fascinating for those of us raised in the west. Implicit within the westerner’s understanding of karma is that one’s deeds do not go unnoticed and that, indeed, an individual will be either rewarded or punished both in this lifetime and in subsequent incarnations for actions carried out today. Perhaps the inculcation in the west of a predominantly Christian dogma which proposes heaven or hell after-life possibilities dependent upon our behavior on earth enables the psyche of the westerner to successfully identify with this aspect of karma called ethicization, “the belief that good and bad acts lead to certain results in one life or several lives” (O’Flaherty, 1980, xi).

In so imagining ourselves collectively as children of an Old Testament father capable of compassion and wrath, and then subsequently, as sheep under the loving eye of a pastor (manifest in Jesus of Nazareth), the western psyche readily responds to the karmic doctrine by supposing that someone or some cosmic principle is, indeed, *watching* over us. As argued by Freud, such perception may actually stem from a collective projection upon a divine father for lack of a satisfying relationship with our actual biological fathers. This point notwithstanding, it is not a big leap to imagine a western acceptance of a divine father enforcing a sort of karmic law upon us as well. Doing so stirs up the societal baggage of a western father complex, one born of guilt for both loving a divine image of father (and our *actual* fathers) yet wanting to overthrow them to fully test our accomplishments and differentiation from them as individuals.

Of primary concern in this paper are the actual roots of the karmic doctrine and its subsequent integration into the modern western psyche with the help of the theories C. G. Jung, the founder of analytical psychology. Implicit within the karmic doctrine is the concept of accumulation resulting from a synthesis of negative and positive actions which add up to a current balance of energy much like the funds available to us in a bank account. How one

manages to preserve, invest or squander these funds over the course of one's lifetime is the result of many personal decisions. Nevertheless, one cannot spend what is not there, at least not in a responsible manner. Thus, a coming to terms with predetermined limitations coupled with a concept of free will, in the broadest possible sense, form the two opposing tenants which comprise the single paradoxical law of karma and its relevance to the individual.

In picturing one's life (or lifetimes) laid out linearly left-to-right upon a timeline, it would appear that karma, as a force, concerns itself primarily with the past and the immediate present. Our karma unfolds from the past but is also created anew in the moment. Its momentum progresses on a bearing from left to right, past to present. Jung, however, postulates that life is inherently teleological (Gr. *telos* end, purpose: the fact or character attributed to nature or natural processes of being directed toward an end or shaped by a purpose). Although Jung also allows for similar left-to-right movement on the above described timeline, the motivating forces he believes to be at work are those which *attract* the individual towards a final end. In this way, it is a force based in the *future* which exerts its pull upon the individual as opposed to one which propels the individual from the *past* as implied by the karmic model. In describing life as fundamentally teleological, Jung imagines our progress as running towards a goal:

“Life is an energy-process. Like every energy-process, it is in principle irreversible and is therefore directed towards a goal. That goal is a state of rest. In the long run everything that happens is, as it were, no more than the initial disturbance of a perpetual state of rest which forever attempts to re-establish itself. Life is teleology *par excellence*; it is the intrinsic striving towards a goal, and the living organism is a system of directed aims which seek to fulfill themselves” (1958, *CW* 8, para. 798). In his conceptualization, Jung appears to take into account forces which both propel and attract the individual as evidenced by his use of the term ‘directed’ in the above passage. This paper later provides further examples of how Jung's archetypal theory accounts for the unconscious ‘directing’ which occurs within the human psyche.

In exploring the origins of the word karma, one finds that they can be traced to the ritual surrounding the actual burnt offering of the Vedic sacrifice. “At the most basic level, the Vedic tradition employed the term *karman*, from the Sanskrit root /kr (‘to do’), to describe the ‘doing’ of the sacrificial ritual. However, over the many centuries during which it represented India's ‘culturally hegemonous’ system of belief and practice, the Vedic sacrifice developed into an entity of astounding complexity, and the ‘doing’ of the sacrifice became more than a matter of simple action” (Tull, 1989, p. 6).

Tull argues that the Vedic sacrifice had as its purpose the invocation of a microcosmic world order, one wherein the laws of the greater cosmos were mirrored and the gods propitiated by a controlled act of death made literal in the act of an animal offering. The *Purusasukta*, one of the books of the *Rgveda*, describes the creation of the cosmos by the divinity Purusa in two distinct phases. In the first, he is “spread asunder in all directions, to what eats and does not eat” (*Rgveda* 10.94.4, cited in Tull). Since the cosmos are still in a state of primordial undifferentiation, this spreading of the god Purusa in all directions establishes “him as the stuff or *materia prima* of creation” (Tull, p. 51). In the second phase of creation, Purusa's distributed essence brings forth the cosmos as manifest in the concrete forms of earth, sun, moon and humankind.

Central to this origin myth is the theme of sacrifice as requisite for creation. In this sense, the supreme act of creation can occur only by way of a supreme act of sacrifice of the

creator's body. "The form of this sacrifice is dismemberment" (Rgveda 10.90.11, cited in Tull). "Purusa's body represents the whole of the undifferentiated cosmos; to bring forth the manifest cosmos, with its several constituents, this whole must be broken up into distinct parts" (Tull, p. 51). And so, upon the fire altar of the sacrifice (the Agnicayana), a liminal space is created wherein the performer of the ritual substitutes an offering to be sacrificed in exchange for *his* ultimate sacrifice which will eventually occur in the burning of the body on his own funeral pyre. In exchange for the controlled act of destruction manifest in the sacrifice, this act which "purports to force access to the other world" expects a response in the form of life, "or in simple terms, one must sacrifice a cow in order to obtain cows" (Heesterman, 1978, cited in Tull, 1989).

In this way, the expectations and action of Vedic sacrifice itself, the 'doing' of the ritual, reinforce the idea that in something dying, something new will be born in response. Later, at the time of death, the one performing the sacrifice will move up one level in the cosmic analogy, transcending yet replicating the symbolism of the ritual by actually becoming a part of the cosmos with his sacrifice. His death and implied rebirth are literally informed by the structure of the ritual which he has dutifully performed throughout his life. In this way, *karma* is enacted on multiple levels of which the most mundane, that of the sacrifice, serves as microcosm for a universal order. No longer just symbolic agency, the soul is now an active player in the cosmic dance.

In considering these origins of the karmic doctrine, it becomes evident that life, as seen from an eastern perspective, is but an unfolding of a momentum within which we as souls have the fortune to partake and even influence. In recognizing creation itself as the result of a selfless act of sacrifice it is fitting to acknowledge that "indeed one becomes good by good action, bad by bad action (Bhahdaranyak Upanisad 3.2.13, cited in Tull). It is thus left to each individual to assist in the creation of the cosmos by performing *good* deeds, or at least, living one's life to the fullest by returning to the sacrificial fire what was given to all of us at the moment of creation.

The reader perhaps cannot help but notice thematic similarities between the Vedic origin of karma and those surrounding the inception of Christianity. In both, a supreme sacrifice is made by a divinity whose death provides humankind with the opportunity for continued existence. In both cases, a platform for the continuance of the world is provided along with sanctuary for humanity's mundane existence upon it. Both also offer metaphysical alternatives. In the case of the west, salvation is equated with life everlasting as a sort of final destination and is available to any believer who confesses sins and acknowledges Jesus Christ as savior. In the east, each lifetime functions as a proving ground wherein the individual strives to better his accrued karmic lot so that someday he may be released from *samsara*, the cycle of reincarnation and suffering, and merge with Brahman, Hinduism's absolute godhead.

From this vantage point, the core themes influencing eastern and western psyche may not be as dissimilar as previously thought. At the heart of the issue, however, is the following discrepancy. The book of Genesis, where the Judeo-Christian origin myth is both inscribed and rooted in western psyche, does not tell the story of a selfless act of sacrifice which in turn begets the cosmos. From the start, the god of the Hebrew Torah (Old Testament) indicates the necessity for an I-thou relationship between himself and humankind. As Joseph Campbell (1991) puts it, "As long as an illusion of ego remains, the commensurate illusion of a separate deity also will be there; and vice versa, as long as the idea of a separate deity is cherished, an illusion of ego, related to it in love, fear, worship, exile or atonement, will also be there" (p. 14).

Jung and others have argued that the evolution of the god-image in the western collective psyche found it necessary to tell the story of Christ the Redeemer in an attempt to compensate the I-thou relationship that had characterized the West's relationship with god up until that point in history. Perhaps some benefits are to be had in our 'sky god' incarnating in the body of a man. That this god/man sacrificed his life to offer humanity eternal life certainly resonates with the Vedic origin myth reviewed here. Still, east and west approach spirituality and humanity's relationship with the divine in markedly contrasting ways. According to Swami Vivekananda (1901), "no one can get anything except he earns it; this is an eternal law; we may think it is not so, but in the long run we shall be convinced of it . . . A fool may buy all the books in the world, but they will be in his library, and he will only be able to read those he deserves, and this deserving is produced by karma" (p. 20).

It is very likely that as result of reading at least most of the books in his library and recognizing the unity found in eastern religion between the creator and his creation that C. G. Jung strove to bring to the west an awareness of this different approach to the divine. Jung's karma led him to develop theories that continue to act as a bridge between east and west and also collectively identify substrata of psyche that link all humanity. In this way, increasing our understanding of the eastern psyche is but one path on the road to understanding all of humanity. Reading Jung this way shows how greatly he was influenced by the karmic doctrine.

Jung reveals his high esteem for eastern philosophy in the memorial address he gave for his friend Richard Wilhelm in 1930. In it, he notes that a significant sign of the times is the fact that "Wilhelm and the indologist Hauer were asked to lecture on yoga at this year's congress of German psychotherapists . . . Imagine what it means when a practicing physician . . . establishes contact with an Eastern system of healing!" He further asserts that "I know that our unconscious is full of Eastern symbolism" (1958, *CW* 15, para. 90). According to the tome transcribed and written by his secretary but often referred to as his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung showed that he understood the mandalas he had been drawing during and immediately after his confrontation with the unconscious (1912-1918) were "cryptograms concerning the state of the self which were presented to me anew each day. In them I saw the self—that is, my whole being—actively at work" (p. 196). Not until 1927 when Jung received from Wilhelm a copy of the Taoist alchemical treatise *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, did he receive an "undreamed-of confirmation of my ideas about the mandala and the circumambulation of the center" (p. 197).

Coward (1985) points out the stunning parallels between Jung's description of *tapas*, "a term which can best be rendered as self-brooding" and a passage in the Isa Upanisad which describes the Atman. First, Jung: "This expression clearly pictures the state of meditation without content, in which the libido is supplied to one's own self somewhat in the same manner of incubating heat. As a result of the complete detachment of all affective ties to the object, there is necessarily formed in the inner self an equivalent of objective reality, or a complete identity of inside and outside, which is technically described as *tat tvam asi* (that art thou). The fusion of the self with its relations to the object produces the identity of the self (atman) with the essence of the world . . . so that the identity of the inner with the outer atman is cognized" (1958, *CW* 6, para. 189).

Compare the above with the following Isa Upanisad passage provided by Coward: "The Atman is unmoving, one, swifter than the mind. The senses do not reach It as It is ever ahead of them. Though Itself standing still, It outstrips those who run. In It the all pervading air supports the activities of beings. It moves and It moves not; It is far and It is near; It is

within all this and It is also outside all this” (*Isa Upanisad 4-5* cited in Coward). It is apparent that Jung drew heavily upon the eastern religious concept of Atman in the formulation of his concept of the Self. If the Self is for Jung a sort of sun in a solar model around which other entities of the psyche revolve, such as the ego (Earth), anima, and shadow, then the archetypes would correspond to the primordial stuff of which the sun and all the other planets are composed. For Jung, the Self was paradoxically both the container and the contained. In this analogy, then, the Self would simultaneously be represented by the Sun and the universe.

Jung elaborated his pivotal theory of the archetype throughout his life’s work. In the eastern tradition of yoga, Jung found corroboration of his own theories. Coward argues that Jung uses the term *yoga* to mean a way of life involving both psychology and philosophy. Jung’s interest “from the beginning was not with Patanjali’s technical definitions but with the spiritual development of the personality as the goal of all yoga” (p. 3). In October 1932, Jung gave a series of seminars on chakra symbolism of Tantra Yoga titled a *Psychological Commentary on Kundalini Yoga*. In an attempt to define *samskara*, memory trace, to his western audience, he likens it to “. . . our idea of heredity . . . also, our hypothesis of the collective unconscious” (Jung, 1975a, p. 8). In later editions of *On the Psychology of the Unconscious*, he placed a footnote at the end of a description of the collective unconscious where he describes it as containing the “. . . legacy of ancestral life, the mythological images: these are the archetypes . . .” and calls it “a deliberate extension of the archetype by means of the *karmic* factor . . . (which is) essential to deeper understanding of the nature of an archetype” (1958, *CW* 7, para. 118n). Elsewhere Jung states that “We may cautiously accept the idea of karma only if we understand it as *psychic heredity* in the very widest sense of the word. Psychic heredity does exist—that is to say, there is inheritance of psychic characteristics such as predisposition to disease, traits of character, special gifts, and so forth” (*CW* 11, para. 845).

Jung continued to refute the notion of a personal karma since “the main bulk of life is brought into existence out of sources that are hidden to us. Even complexes can start a century or more before a man is born. There is something like karma” (Jung, 1975b, p. 436). Only later in life did Jung begin to accept the possibility of a personal karma, one more specific in its implications to a person’s destiny than the collective attributes he had always assigned to it in helping him see corroboration of his theory of the collective unconscious in other religions. Jung connects the collective unconscious, ancestral memories and as yet *unfulfilled* archetypal images with a sort of collective karma.

Although Jung openly credits karma theory as influencing his theories of the archetype, Coward aptly points out that “little recognition is given to this major Eastern influence by either Jacobi, Jung’s systematizer, or Jungian scholars . . . this apparent attempt to hide or ignore the Eastern content in Jung’s archetype may be . . . a fear among Jungians that such an admission would make their already suspect psychology even less acceptable to the mainstream of Western psychology” (Coward, 1975, p. 98).

Jung offers a rebuttal to those who would criticize his theory by wondering “what sort of idea my critics would have used to characterize the empirical material in question” (1958, *CW* 7, para. 118n). Later in life, Jung’s dreams provided evidence pointing to his own reincarnation. For him, it was these dreams, plus those of a close acquaintance, which led to a very positive assessment of Indian karma and rebirth theory in the last years of his life. In the chapter *On Life after Death* in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung states, “I could well imagine that I have lived in former centuries and there encountered questions I was not yet able to answer; that I had to be born again because I had not fulfilled the task that was given

to me. When I die, my deeds will follow along with me - that is how I imagine it” (Jung, 1989, p. 318).

Jung believed that his purpose this lifetime was to bring the shadow to the Christian archetype. In striving throughout his life to portray the image of god as containing both evil and good, Jung sought to bring a union of the opposites to our western consciousness so as to avoid the literal playing out of the Judeo-Christian god’s inherent imbalance upon our lives.