

# Evolution, Jung, and Theurgy:

Their Role in Modern Neoplatonism

Extended Version<sup>1</sup>

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*The soul must take the hint from the relics our scientists have so marvelously gathered out of the forgotten past, and from the hint develop a new living utterance. The spark is from dead wisdom, but the fire is life.*

— D. H. Lawrence

## I. Introduction

This paper explores the rich cross-connections between Neoplatonism, Jungian psychology, and evolutionary neuroethology, which provide three mutually consistent perspectives on human nature, each illuminating the others. My emphasis in this article is on the insights that Jungian psychology and evolutionary neuroethology can bring to Neoplatonism; in particular, I will use them to explicate theurgical practices.

Since I will be appealing to evolution, genetics, and neuroscience, it might be supposed that I am advocating a materialist reduction of Jungian psychology and Neoplatonism, but I am not. Rather, I will adopt the ordinary neuropsychological perspective that the phenomenological reality of psychological states and processes is not negated by their correlation with neurological processes.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, it does not contradict the reality of the archetypal Ideas to propose evolutionary neurophysiological explanations of them. In this way we may begin to integrate physical, psychical, and spiritual phenomena into a comprehensive theory.

In this paper I proceed by the dialectic method, beginning with certain common notions, ascending thence to first principles, and then redescending with conclusions drawn from these principles.

## II. Evolutionary Neuroethology and the Archetypes

### Evolutionary Neuroethology

Ethology studies animal behavior, and neuroethology studies the neural structures subserving animal behavior. Evolutionary neuroethology, then, studies the evolution of these neural structures. This discipline may seem remote indeed from Neoplatonism, but I will argue for its relevance.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is an extended version of a chapter to appear in *Plato Redivivus: Studies in the History of Platonism*, John F. Finamore & Robert Berchman (eds.), University Press of the South.

<sup>2</sup> Discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this paper. Our particular approach to the problem of consciousness can be found in MacLennan (1995; 1996).

We begin with the observation that there are perceptual and behavioral structures characteristic of each species; these dynamical structures are commonly called instincts. Further, these innate structures are coupled to the species' *environment of evolutionary adaptedness*; this is the term evolutionary biologists use to refer to the environment in which the species has evolved and to which it has become adapted through natural selection. These innate perceptual-behavioral structures are common to all members of the species and change very slowly (at evolutionary timescales).

As a species, *Homo sapiens* also has innate perceptual-behavioral structures, although there is scientific disagreement about what, specifically, they are. It is fundamentally an empirical question, although often distorted by ideology. For my argument, all that is essential is that we grant that such structures exist.

The instincts define a life-cycle pattern for each member of the species, which unfolds through the developmental program encoded in the genome. That is, the *phylogenetic* pattern, encoded in the genome, is expressed *ontogenetically* by the individual's development in, and interaction with, its environment. A particular organism's environment may differ from its species' environment of evolutionary adaptedness, which is especially the case with modern humans.

The instinctual patterns of behavior are *potentiated* at various times in an organism's life, but are *activated* by an *innate releasing mechanism* when the corresponding *releaser* or *sign stimulus* is present. For example, in many animals mating behavior is potentiated at sexual maturity, but activated by a releaser such as an estrus-related pheromone.

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### **The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious**

Next we consider the concept of the archetypes of the collective unconscious, as developed in Jungian psychology. In this I am leaning heavily on the work of Anthony Stevens, a Jungian psychologist who has devoted much attention to the connections between the archetypes and evolutionary neuroethology (Stevens 1982; 1993).

The archetypes of the collective unconscious are the psychological aspects of the innate perceptual-behavioral structures of the human species.<sup>3</sup> For example, Jung (*CW* 8, ¶404) says,

To the extent that the archetypes intervene in the shaping of conscious contents by regulating, modifying, and motivating them, they act like the instincts.

Thus the archetypes are not innate *images*, as is often supposed, but *dynamic forms* shaping perception and behavior. Together they constitute the *collective unconscious*, so called because they are common to all humans and because they are unconscious until

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<sup>3</sup> Space does not permit a detailed exploration of the relation between the archetypes, studied by Jungian psychologists, and the evolutionary foundations of the instincts, studied by neuroethologists. My arguments are based on Stevens (1982, 1993), which should be consulted for a comprehensive presentation.

activated by a *releasing stimulus* (which may be internal or external). As Jung (*CW* 9, pt. 1, ¶91) remarks,

The hypothesis of the collective unconscious is ... no more daring than to assume that there are instincts.

When an archetype is activated, it causes the releasing situation or relationship to be experienced as numinous and significant; the individual may feel predisposed or even compelled to act in evolutionarily relevant ways. Mating behavior is the clearest example.

### III. Connections with Neoplatonism

#### Jung's Debt to Neoplatonism

For our purposes, the important point is that the archetypes are essentially the Platonic Ideas. This, in itself, is not a new notion, nor is it surprising. Indeed, Jung (*CW* 9, pt. 1, ¶5) says, “‘Archetype’ is an explanatory paraphrase of the Platonic εἶδος,” and he cites its use by Philo Judaeus (*De opf. mundi*, I.69), Irenaeus (*Adv. haer.*, II.7.5), the *Corpus Hermeticum* (I.8, II.12), and pseudo-Dionysius (*De cael. hier.*, II.4; *De div. nom.*, I.6); the term is also used by Plotinus (e.g., 5.1.4). Indeed Jung (*CW* 8, ¶154) defines archetypes as

active living dispositions, ideas in the Platonic sense, that preform and continually influence our thoughts and feelings and actions.

Certainly Jung seems to have been influenced more directly by Gnosticism than by Neoplatonism, for the Gnostics, as Jung (1965, 200) says,

had been confronted with the primal world of the unconscious and had dealt with its contents, with images that were obviously contaminated with the world of instinct.

But Gnosticism itself has many connections with Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism. Eventually Jung became interested in alchemy because he saw it as a “bridge that led from Gnosticism — or neo-Platonism — to the contemporary world” (*op. cit.*, 201).

As psychologist James Hillman (1975a, 198) remarks, “There are striking likenesses between the main themes of Neoplatonism and archetypal psychology.” He notes (Hillman 1975b) that although Jung cites Neoplatonists infrequently, he was inspired at an early stage of his career by the Neoplatonist scholar Friedrich Creuzer, who later edited the works of Plotinus, Proclus, and Olympiodorus. Jung (1965, 162) says that he “read like mad” Creuzer’s *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker*, and “worked with feverish interest” through this Neoplatonic analysis of mythology. Hillman refrains from claiming a direct dependence of Jung on Plotinus via Creuzer, but he does

want to suggest, and strongly, that the reason Jung was so fired by Creuzer was because he and Creuzer shared the same spirit, a profoundly similar psychological attitude, an archetypal attitude, which tradition calls Neoplatonist (Hillman 1975b, 149).

He notes further affinities, calling the Florentine Neoplatonist and theurgist Marsilio Ficino the Renaissance patron of archetypal psychology (1975a, 200), and claiming, “Ficino was writing, not philosophy as has always been supposed, but an archetypal psychology” (1975a, 202). (See also Hillman 1975b on Ficino.)

In summary, there is reason to conclude that Jung was influenced by Neoplatonism both directly and indirectly (via Gnosticism and alchemy), but even were he not, *we* can see the connections now and use each to illuminate the other.

### Characteristics of the Archetypes

To understand the relevance of the archetypes to Neoplatonism, we can begin by observing that an archetype is incompletely manifested in any particular concrete situation, which leads to it being recognized as existing independently as a field of structured potentiality. Thus an archetype is an independent, universal form guiding perception and behavior.

Since many of the human instincts govern our relations with other humans, the most familiar archetypes are personified. Indeed, as Jung stresses, the archetypes behave as autonomous personalities, independent of our conscious control. This is because consciousness is just one part of the total psyche; like an organ, it has evolved because of the selective advantage it confers on our species. It therefore functions as one element in the panoply of our psychological faculties. As a consequence of their numinous autonomy, the personified archetypes are experienced as gods, and the relations among them provide the basic structure of mythology.

However, it is a mistake to think the archetypes are “merely psychological,” with the implication that they are in some way imaginary and subjective. Rather, they are objectively real in that they are *empirical*, *stable*, and *public*. They are empirical in that their existence and character can be inferred from their effects in experience; they are stable in that they are (relatively) unchanging; and they are public in that they are common to all humans. (Thus Jung calls the collective unconscious the *objective psyche*.) Therefore, the archetypes exist, but not in a physical way; they are immaterial forms governing the dynamics of perception and behavior. In this sense the archetypes are as real as the human genome, the laws of nature, and the laws of mathematics.

The archetypes are a source of transcendent meaning because they integrate individual lives into the greater patterns of humanity and the universe; the archetypes give transpersonal meaning and significance to situations and relationships in human life. Archetypally meaningful situations or relationships are numinous (that is, hallowed, miraculous, uncanny, supernatural, or the like); being in love is a familiar example (Stevens 1982, 67–8, 199), a θεῖα μανία (divine madness).

Hitherto I have stressed the grounding of the archetypal Ideas in human genetics. However, it is essential to recognize, as did Jung (*CW* 8, ¶420), that any physical process that has a psychical aspect and is common to all people is, by definition, archetypal (Stevens 1982, 71). This is because the archetypes are the components of the objective psyche and, as we have seen, to be objectively real, they must be public, stable, and empirical (that is, have conscious *effects* even though, as *causes*, they are unconscious). Therefore any natural law will be archetypal, provided that it also has a psycho-spiritual aspect, that is, provided that it conditions perception, behavior, and meaningful experience. As Marie-Louise von Franz (1974, 7) says, “The lowest collective level of our psyche is simply pure nature.”

Human instincts mostly mediate interrelations among humans, therefore most of the archetypes are personified (that is, experienced as personalities: the gods). In contrast, the non-human-specific archetypes are not usually personified, and so they are experienced more as impersonal forces, but with a psychological aspect. For example, all animals make distinctions, and the experiences of discriminating one thing from another, and of settling into a course of action, *are* archetypal experiences, which are correlated to fundamental neural processes. Therefore dichotomy and decision may have a numinous quality.

The laws of nature obey the laws of mathematics, and like a true Pythagorean, Jung thought that the most fundamental archetypes are numerical; we may call them the *archetypal numbers*. In a letter he wrote, “I have a distinct feeling that number is a key to the mystery, since it is just as much discovered as invented. It is quantity as well as meaning” (von Franz 1974, 9). Von Franz (1974) has made an important start on unraveling the archetypal structure of the numbers.

For example, as we’ve seen, duality (that is, the Dyad) is the archetypal Idea underlying experiences of dichotomy, opposition, or clear differentiation. Psychologically, it is the archetypal experience of a neural system settling into one of two dynamical “attractors.” Conjunction (that is, the active Triad) leads to the experience of the resolution of a state of conflict, the bridging of a gap, or relaxation into a stable state. The passive Triad, in contrast, underlies the experience of the mean, that is, of balance between two opposed extremes. The Tetrad is the foundation of experiences of completeness and equilibrium, as shown in Jung’s extensive studies of the *quaternio*. The Monad, of course, underlies our experience of identity, as when we recognize something, grasping what it *is*, or its being. The most profound experience of unity arises when, under conditions of mental quiet, the brain ceases its construction of a model of the body and its surroundings, the fundamental duality of self and other. When the illusion of duality is dropped, we experience unity.

Finally, the Monad and Indefinite Dyad, as a pair, underlie our experiences of sameness and difference; recall Plato’s Circles of the Same and the Different in the World Soul. Similarly, Φιλότης and Νείκος, “Love” and “Strife” (so called), are fundamental forces at many levels of reality: unity and division; cooperation and competition in evolution, and the cooperative-competitive dynamics of many natural systems, which leads to self-organization.

## IV. Some Implications for Neoplatonism

### The Genome as an Eternal Form

Having understood connections between ethology, Jungian psychology, and Neoplatonism, we can proceed to look at their implications for Neoplatonism. To this end it will be useful to review a few facts from genetics, as currently understood.

An individual human *genotype* is an abstract mathematical form, which can be expressed as a word, approximately 300 million characters in length, written with the letters A, C, G, T; this is an individual’s genetic code. Each person’s code is very slightly different, except of course for identical twins’. It’s equivalent to a binary number 600 million bits long, that is, a number of approximately 200 million digits. As a

mathematical form, a person's genotype is eternal, that is, atemporal, although of course the person is not.

At any given time a small subset of the possible genotypes will be participated, that is, represented in matter, in the DNA constituting the chromosomes of living cells. So, for example, the chromosomes in all of my cells participate in a certain mathematical form, which is my genotype.

In the nucleus of a zygote, or fertilized egg, this genetic material controls the development of an individual. Of course this control is not absolute, for an individual develops in interaction with its environment, first the mother's womb, later the external environment. The term *phenotype* refers to the resulting individual, whose traits have been conditioned, but not determined, by the genotype. Thus the genotype is expressed through the unique unfolding of the phenotype in time and space. (As phenotypes, even "identical" twins are each unique.)

For the sake of simplicity, let me ignore evolution for the moment and treat *Homo sapiens* as a fixed species, defined by the ability to interbreed (subject to sex constraints) and produce fertile offspring. From this perspective, *H. sapiens* corresponds to a mathematical set of genotypes, those potentially able to produce individuals capable of interbreeding. In this sense, *H. sapiens* is also an eternal mathematical form. The human *genome*, then, may be defined as the common form of all the human genotypes.

Of course there are many technical issues in the definition of species, but they are not critical at this time. If we can accept that *H. sapiens* is a well-defined biological concept, then the human genome is a correspondingly well-defined mathematical form. It too can be represented as a 300 million-character word, which happens to begin, "GATCAA TGA GGT..."

### **The Primal Nous and the Noetic Order**

We have seen that the archetypal Ideas are the psychical correlates of the perceptual-behavioral structures common to all human beings and so the archetypal Ideas are implicit in the human genome.

They are encoded in the genome, but not in an explicit form, for if we look at the characters "GATCAA..." we will not see any of the archetypes. That is, there is no reason to suppose any simple correspondence between the individual archetypes and particular genes: "Almost all capacities are prescribed by combinations of genes at many sites on the chromosomes" (Wilson 1975, 198). Further, each gene may have a large number of effects (Wilson 1975, 198). Thus the archetypes are implicit in the genome, and become explicit only when expressed in the psyche of a living organism. That is, in the genome the archetypal Ideas are "all in all, but each in its own way" (πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν, οἰκείως δὲ ἐν ἑκάστῳ), which is how Proclus described the Henads (e.g., *El. Th.* pr. 118), which exist in an undifferentiated unity in the One. We may compare them to the spectrum of colors hidden in white light.

The genome corresponds to the unified archetypal Form or Idea from which all other archetypal Ideas derive, the εἶδος εἰδῶν (Form of Forms), in Proclus' terms, the παράδειγμα (model) of the archetypal world (*Pl. Th.* III.15; Siovanes 1996, 164). In many respects, therefore, the genome can be seen as the abstract form corresponding to

the hypostasis known as the Primal Nous, the Pure Nous, the First God, and so forth. This is the Noetic or Intelligible order where, according to Syrianus, the essential numbers exist undivided in the tetrad, not separated into a series as in the lower orders (O'Meara 1989, 136). Significantly, Syrianus also says that the νοητά ("intelligibles") exist in τὸ αὐτοζῶον, the "abstract animal" or "animal itself" (O'Meara 1989, 136), surely a good term for the genome.

### **Individual Variation**

Before continuing, however, there is an issue that must be mentioned, for the genome is a mathematical abstraction. No living human has precisely this "ideal" form. Rather, each of our genotypes differs somewhat from this norm. The differences are quite small: less than one percent of the genome. Nevertheless, as a consequence, it is possible that the archetypal Ideas differ somewhat for each of us. This conclusion might seem to contradict the idea of a collective unconscious, common to all humans, but it does not.

Genetic variation is a biological fact, but it still makes sense to talk about "the human liver" and "the human face," despite individual differences. So also it makes sense to talk of "the human genome," and of such universal archetypes as the Monad or the Great Mother. Nevertheless, the fact of genetic variation requires us to revise our view of the archetypal Ideas. Since we each have a different genotype, it is possible, at least, that the archetypes present a slightly different face to each of us.

This will be clearer if we consider the most obvious genetic difference among humans: sex. Female and male genotypes differ in that females have two X chromosomes, but males have an X and a Y. This leads to *sexual dimorphism* in the human species: there are two distinct body forms within our species. Furthermore, in humans as in other species, sexual dimorphism leads to differences in the perceptual-behavioral structures associated with procreation and other complex behaviors. In particular, we may say that the gods treat men and women somewhat differently. This is most apparent in the area of sexuality (Aphrodite, we may say, presents a different face to men and women), but in other areas as well. Any sex-linked genes, that is, genes that reside on the sex chromosomes, may lead to sexual dimorphism. Furthermore, sexual differences may alter the expression of other genes that do not reside on the sex chromosomes (e.g., through the medium of hormones).

On the one hand, we have seen that, in spite of genotypic differences, it makes sense to talk of a common human liver or human face. On the other hand, because of sexual dimorphism, it also makes sense to talk of a male body and a female body. The same holds for the archetypal Ideas, which are implicit in the genome. Many of them are universal throughout humankind. On the other hand, sexual dimorphism is to be expected in the archetypal realm just as much as in the physical realm. The general picture is clear, but much empirical research will be required to unravel the specifics.

An individual's genotype is derived from and related to the genotypes of that individual's parents, as their genotypes relate to their parents'. Thus an individual's genotype is at the root of a tree of genotypic similarities exactly parallel to the individual's family tree. This tree also represents inherited similarities in individual relations to the archetypal realm. As a consequence there may be differences in the

relations of the gods with different families. Indeed, some families may be blessed, others cursed, by a deity. Thus the chorus in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* addresses the “*Daimôn* that falls upon the house and the two sons of Tantalus,” which Clytemnestra calls the “thrice glutted *daimôn* of this race” (*Ag.* 1468, 1475-6). This is a δαίμων γέννης, the *daimôn* of a kinship group (see below for more on *daimôn*s).

I can put this in more concrete and perhaps more plausible terms. We are learning from the rapidly developing field of behavioral genetics that heritable factors may predispose individuals to various complex psychological traits. Thus, for example, it certainly would be worthwhile for someone to know if their ancestors were in the lineage of Saturn and subject to his *melancholia*, since then they could practice theurgical operations to invite other deities into their life and mitigate the Saturnian influence. Ficino, in his *Liber de Vita*, discusses this example in detail (see especially Bk. I).

Nevertheless, these familial influences are minor parochial variations on a much larger shared theme. Therefore I will return my attention to the common archetypal Ideas of all people, and their roots in the human genome.

### **The Demiurge and the Noeric Order**

Let us return to the biological correlates of the descent of the soul. The genetic material in the zygote governs the development of the fetus, including its brain. Therefore, the archetypal Ideas, which are implicit in the timeless pattern of the genome, come to be embodied in neural structures in the brain. That is, the archetypal Ideas become articulated in distinct information structures, although they are still timeless patterns, hidden unmanifest in the unconscious. They correspond to the νοερά (“intellectuals”), the articulated Ideas in the Logos of the Demiurge, or Second God, the “mediating dyad” who implants the Ideas into the womb of Nature (*Chald. Or.* fr. 8, 37).

Syrianus, in his *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, noted that the innate discursive Forms (διανοητὰ εἶδη), which are placed in the soul by the Demiurge, serve two functions. For ordinary souls — those who have “fallen” in the *Phaedrus* myth — they function gnostically (γνωστικῶς), that is, as objects of recognition and contemplation that lead to ἀνάμνησις, the recollection of the archetypal Ideas. However, for divine and daimonic souls they function demiurgically (δημιουργικῶς), that is, they function as organizing principles in nature. The demiurgic function applies in particular to the ἄχραντοι (“pure ones”), who have incarnated for our benefit; their souls are daimonic not by nature (φύσει), but by condition (σχέσει). Thus we might say that daimonic souls, including the ἄχραντοι, do not merely contemplate the Ideas, they live them. By serving as living embodiments of the archetypal Ἄνθρωπος, or Ideal Human, they invite our projections and serve as living σύμβολα, constellating the archetypal Ideas in our souls. (See O'Meara 1989, chs. 6-7 on the discursive Forms and daimonic souls.)

It is important to remark that this developmental process is not independent of the environment. Even before birth the intrauterine environment has its effect, most obviously in cases such as fetal alcohol syndrome, but also in normal development, for there is accumulating evidence for other, subtler prenatal effects on the developing fetus. The significance of these observations is that, again, the archetypal structures encoded in the brain are not entirely determined by the genotype; under different circumstances, that



is, different historical contingencies, a different phenotype would result. Therefore again, the gods will relate in a slightly different way to each person; there will be individual variation in the archetypal Ideas.

### **The World Soul and Individual Souls**

The articulated archetypal Ideas, the νοερά, are represented by static information structures in the brain, but they manifest to consciousness in dynamic patterns of perception and behavior. That is, the individual ψυχή (animate soul) embodied in the electrochemical activity of the brain, brings the archetypes into manifestation in space and time.

The νοερά, although represented in the material brain, are still fundamentally eternal Forms, which are — ignoring minor individual variation — universal, that is, common to all humans. The ψυχή embodies these Ideas in matter in a more fundamental way, for it particularizes them in a numerically individual body and activates them in particular events in time. The archetypal Ideas become divided and extended in space and time. Thus, ψυχή mediates between eternity and time.

In Pythagorean terms, these sensible forms (αἰσθητὰ εἶδη) correspond to physical numbers (φυσικοὶ ἀριθμοί), which are inseparable from matter and the guiding forms of psychophysical life; they are images (εἰδῶλα) of the mathematical numbers (μαθηματικοὶ ἀριθμοί), articulated in the demiurgic Logos.

The eternal, universal relation between the νοερά and their temporal expression in an individual is modeled on ἡ Παντὸς Ψυχή (the Soul of the All) or “World Soul.” That is, the World Soul is the transcendent model of all particular souls, and, in answer to a perennial question, we can say that the World Soul is more than the sum of all individual souls.

Albinus (*Didask.* 14.169) said that the Demiurge rouses the World Soul from her κάρος, or trancelike sleep, in which she lies drugged with matter, so that she turns toward him with desire (ὄρεξις) to reproduce his Form in her womb (see also Plutarch, *Proc. An.* 1026EF). One interpretation of this is that the demiurgic Forms residing in the unconscious mind are primed to rouse the soul, which is otherwise occupied with mundane matters, to actualize the Forms of archetypal intent. When this occurs, these Forms impose their structure on the neurophysiological processes, which unfold in time and in interaction with the environment. In this way, the Forms structure natural process.

### **Whether the Soul Descends Completely**

Another perennial problem in Neoplatonism is whether the soul descends completely, as Iamblichus, Syrianus, and Proclus say, or whether a part of it remains “above” in the noetic realm, as Plotinus says. Our account of the biological correlates of the archetypal Ideas provides a basis for addressing this issue.

On the one hand, our genes do not directly produce conscious experience. Thus the genome, and even the individual genotype, remain “above,” like the Ideas in the noetic sphere, where, in their undifferentiated form, the νοητὰ are inaccessible to our minds. The *Chaldean Oracles* call them κρυφίων (“hidden”) and say,

... the Father snatched himself away,  
and didn't close his fire in noeric power. (fr. 3, my tr.)

On the other hand, the articulated noeric images of the archetypal Ideas are represented in our brains in the structures subserving archetypal behavior. The noeric Ideas are unconscious, that is, not directly accessible to our conscious egos, but under appropriate circumstances they manifest (incompletely) in consciousness, and we can know them in this way. This may happen spontaneously, when something, such as an external stimulus, triggers the activation of an archetype, with a resulting synchronistic coordination of inner, psychical and outer, physical phenomena, or it may be arranged by theurgical practices, directed toward establishing contact with the noeric Ideas, as explained later. Thus, from this perspective, we may conclude that our souls remain rooted in the noeric, or demiurgic sphere, but are cut off from direct connection with the noetic realm. Nevertheless, although we cannot apprehend the νοητά, the Demiurgic Nous contemplates them. Therefore, by means of the illumination of the Demiurge, as mediating Logos, we may obtain σωτηρία ("salvation") by living in accord with the Πρόνοια (Providence) of the Paternal Nous.

### **The Impassivity of the Gods**

We can also see that the gods (archetypes) are impassive because our personal experiences do not affect our genotypes. Therefore the gods do not change as a result of our personal experiences; in anthropomorphic terms, they do not respond to us as individuals or remember us, and they relate to us only as members of the human species. (Evolution is considered later.) (Similarly, our gross neural structure is unaffected by experience, except through injury, disease, etc. When these do occur, however, they may result in changes to the way the archetypal Ideas present to us. The victim's μανία may place them in a special relation to divinity.) Although the gods are impassive, they nevertheless may enter into each of our lives at different times and in different ways (as archetypes are activated at different times and in different ways). This individual interaction is mediated by the ψυχή, which thus plays an essential role in our congress with the archetypal gods.

### **Complexes as Daimôns**

The genotype governs the development of the phenotype, in particular, the growth of the individual brain. This is an ongoing process, which begins with the development of the nervous system in the fetus, and continues with the experience-conditioned reorganization of the brain throughout an individual's life. *Complexes*, which are networks of associations, are created by intense or repeated activation of the archetypes in the ontogenetic psyche (Stevens 1982, 65). Therefore, each archetype becomes a nucleus for complexes, which constellate around the *universal* archetypal core, but incorporate *individual* associations, formed according to the laws of similarity and contiguity (Stevens 1982, 65). According to Jungian psychology, the *personal* unconscious, as opposed to the collective unconscious, comprises the complexes formed through this interaction. Although complexes are fundamentally personal, some of them may be shared by families and other groups, even entire cultures.

Popularly, complexes are thought of as pathological conditions, but from a psychological perspective, they are a normal and necessary part of our psyches, for they

mediate between the universal archetypes and our individual lives. One psychologist calls them “the functional units of . . . the ontogenetic psyche” (Stevens 1982, 65).

As Jung (*CW* 8, ¶253) stresses, “complexes behave like independent beings.” That is, each archetypal god engenders δαίμονες (*daimōns*) associated with an individual and constellated from their experiences (Stevens 1982, 66). Such a god may be called the ἀρχηγός, that is, the leader, progenitor, or originator, of its descendent δαίμονες. These δαίμονες are in the god’s σειρά, that is, in their “line” or “lineage.” Similarly, if a god and their δαίμονες dominate a person’s individual psyche, then that person is, in effect, also in the σειρά of the god. Perhaps this is why Pythagoras was said to be in the σειρά of Apollo.

A person’s δαίμονες go through life with the person, and each δαίμων’s nature is structured from those particulars of the individual’s life that are associated with its universal, divine progenitor. Therefore, unlike the archetypal gods, someone’s δαίμονες incorporate aspects of that person’s biography and experiences, for they have developed out of the life of that person (e.g., Plotinus 3.5.6). Because one’s δαίμονες are as much “inside the head” as outside of it, they may incorporate a person’s inmost thoughts, fears, hopes, and so forth. Finally, since δαίμονες exist in space and time, they are creatures of the World Soul, personified as Ἐκάτη Δαιμονιάρχης, that is, Ruler of Daimōns.

### **Possession and Projection**

When we are in an archetypal situation, we are effectively under the influence or compulsion of a god or daimōn. Most archetypal situations have two poles, the *subject*, in which the archetype has been activated, and the *object*, often another person, which has activated it. The subject has been seized by the archetype, and we may say they are “possessed” by the god or daimōn. That is, they are in a state of θεοφορία (bearing a god) or θεοληψία (seized by a god), and so frenzied or inspired. The other pole, the person, group, object, and so forth, at which the archetypal relation is directed, is perceived as especially significant, or numinous, and the subject *projects* an archetypal role onto it. The most familiar example of possession and projection occurs between lover and beloved: the lover is possessed by Eros or Aphrodite; the beloved is perceived as a god or goddess incarnate. Furthermore, because archetypal Ideas are common to all people, the human recipient of a projection may accept it, and thus become possessed by the projected role. That is, an archetypal relation can result in mutual possession (von Franz 1980, 16–17, 27).

Possession is not necessarily bad; it can be a powerful source of archetypal power and inspiration (von Franz 1980, 29). Poets and philosophers invoke the Muses; lovers appeal to Aphrodite and Eros; theurgists may call on Helios. Furthermore, we will see that possession and projection are essential to theurgy.

Possession is dangerous when (as is often the case) a person is unaware that it has taken place, and so they are behaving under the compulsion of a god or daimōn and even their perceptions are colored by its energy. Furthermore, a possessed person may suppose that they are in conscious control of the divine powers, which is a serious misperception known as *ego inflation* or — shall we say? — hubris. Therefore, possession may be empowering as a temporary condition provided the subject remains

aware that they are serving as an instrument of the gods, and not vice versa. (For more on “possession” and projection in Jungian psychology, see von Franz, 1980.)

### **The Οἰκέῖοι Δαίμονες (Personal Daimôn)**

According to Jungian psychology, an especially important daimôn is the *Shadow complex*, known anciently as the κακοδαίμων (the evil daimôn) or more euphemistically as ὁ ἕτερος δαίμων (the “other” daimôn, in contrast to the “good daimôn”). One’s Shadow comprises all the character traits that one has rejected, consciously or unconsciously. Since it comprises material rejected by the individual, by their family, and by larger significant groups, including the culture at large, the Shadow is a complicated, multi-layer complex. It constellates around an archetypal core, which includes the tendency to dichotomize (that is, the Indefinite Dyad). The archetypal nucleus of the Shadow also might include behaviors, such as incest, against which there may be a phylogenetic predisposition (Wilson 1978, 36-9).

The Jungian perspective shows that the Shadow should not be repressed. First, as a daimôn, it is an autonomous personality, and if it is ignored, it will, inevitably, possess and project. Indeed, this is a cause of κακοδαίμονία, that is, misfortune, misery, and even madness. Second, because the Shadow contains rejected aspects of the psyche, and compensates conscious attitudes, it can be a source of balance and untapped power. Therefore, it is better for a person to make the acquaintance of their κακοδαίμων and reach an accord that balances its needs with their conscious ethical commitments. To this end, theurgy may be useful.

Another important complex, which is, in a sense opposed to the Shadow, is the *Superego*, which may be defined as the moral complex. The Superego constellates around an archetypal core that includes our species’ innate predisposition to learn rules and social norms. Perhaps it may be identified with the ἀγαθοδαίμων (“good daimôn”) as moral guide (Dodds 1951, 42), but it must be kept in mind that that this daimôn serves society more than it serves Πρόνοια. Further, in its role as guardian of νόμος, the social norm, it may inhibit communication with other gods and daimôn, especially the Shadow.

The most familiar daimôn is the *ego complex*, that is, our conscious mind, which seems to have evolved to improve our adaptation to the environment. In the West, especially, we are inclined to attach undue significance to this daimôn, and to even identify our psyche with it, but it is just one daimôn among many, and, as Jungian psychology, Neoplatonism, and ethology — as well as other spiritual traditions — all agree, the ego is not in charge, nor should it be. (Who is in charge will be considered next.)

### **The Higher Self**

In Jungian psychology a special role is played by the *Self*, which for clarity I’ll call the “Higher Self.” The Higher Self comprehends the totality of the archetypal field, and therefore it comprises all the archetypes. Thus, the Higher Self comprehends the collective unconscious, and so it must be carefully distinguished from the individual, conscious ego, which is just one of its organs.

The Higher Self is the psychical correlate of the human genome, and thus it represents the “phylogenetic destiny” of the human species (Stevens 1982, 76). That is,

the Higher Self corresponds to the Ἄνθρωπος, the Archetypal Human, familiar from Gnostic and Hermetic texts (Stevens 1993, 47). The Higher Self brings transpersonal meaning and purpose into our lives, and defines the πρόνοια (providence) governing all humans (Stevens 1982, 75–6). Further, as we have seen, behind the personified archetypes are the more remote unpersonified archetypal Ideas corresponding to natural and mathematical law (Stevens 1982, 71–4). These, too, are part of the Higher Self, and therefore constitutive of our destiny.

To live meaningful, significant lives, then, we should live in conscious, intentional accord with the destiny of the universe. Jung called this lifelong process *individuation*, because through it a person becomes *individuus*, that is, undivided, integral. As the Jungian analyst Anthony Stevens (1982, 142) says, “Individuation is a conscious attempt to bring the universal programme of human existence to its fullest possible expression in the life of the individual.” Wisdom, then, is to be guided by the Πρόνοια of the Higher Self.

This transcendent Higher Self, corresponding to the genome, also has an immanent projection, and we may identify, perhaps, the immanent Higher Self with the ἴδιος δαίμων, the personal or guardian daimôn, at least in some versions of that idea. The Higher Self also seems to be a likely candidate for Socrates’ δαίμόνιον. Dodds (1951, 42) argues that from the Archaic period someone’s personal daimôn was virtually synonymous with their destiny, and Georg Luck (1985, 171) remarked, “the *daimonion* could be called the suprarational personality that controls the whole of our lives...”

Jung stresses that the Higher Self is paradoxical — and even contradictory — because it comprehends all the opposites. He calls it the *Unus Mundus*, but in Neoplatonic terms it is τὸ ἄρρητον ἓν (the Inexpressible One), which unifies mind and matter, unity and plurality, stability and change — indeed being and non-being. The only way to bridge these contradictions, according to Jung, is by a symbolic process, which he calls the *transcendent function*. This is the basis for the essential role of symbols in theurgy (explained later).

### **The Anima and Animus as Psychopomps**

Soon after an infant begins to discriminate itself from its environment, the first archetypal relation is actualized, the child-parent relation. Later, this differentiates into the child-mother relation, and the archetypal Mother, as ultimate source of care and inward relation to family, is projected onto the mortal mother. In effect, the infant has discovered the Mother Goddess, the source of the so-called *Eros principle*. Later, the child-father axis forms, and the archetypal Father, as source of order and outward relation to society, is projected onto the mortal father. The infant discovers the Father God, origin of the so-called *Logos principle*. (Whether these mortals are the biological mother and father is not crucial to the constellation of the archetypes.)

In the child’s discovery of the archetypal Mother and Father, we have the roots of sexual differentiation, and psychologists tell us that a child’s sexual identity begins to form as early as 18 months. As this progresses, the child’s contrasexual traits remain undeveloped in the unconscious. As a man has vestigial breasts and a woman a vestigial penis, so each sex has vestigial psychical characteristics in their unconscious. Jungian psychologists term this archetype the *Anima* in a man and the *Animus* in a woman.

The Anima or Animus has a genetic core, ultimately rooted in the sex chromosomes. However, we know that there is much more to sex than XX versus XY. The phenotypic expression of the genetic sex depends on many environmental factors, from the womb to the social environment. As a consequence, the Anima or Animus exists as both archetype and complex, that is, as both god and daimôn. Like all gods, the archetypal Anima has a somewhat different relation to each man, but is largely the same for them all; so also the Animus for women. On the other hand, the corresponding daimôns may be quite idiosyncratic in their traits, and have much to do with one's personal relation to sex.

As, in many respects, the complement of the ego, the Anima or Animus is the nearest archetype of the collective unconscious. Therefore they are natural psychopomps, who may introduce us to the noeric order, where they and the other gods reside. (Recall that Hekate sits in the sphere of the moon, guarding the gate between the terrestrial and celestial realms.) Because of this nearness, the Anima of a man may serve as Muse, a source of creativity and feeling, a representative of the Eros Principle, leading the man to the unconscious and the soul. Indeed, Pythagoras adopted the Muses as the patrons of philosophy, a role reflected, for example, in Proclus' "Hymn to the Muses" (Boyancé 1936); they are especially guides in the heroization, or deification, of philosophers. Analogously, the Animus of a woman may be a source of rational purposefulness, a representative of the Logos Principle, leading upward to the spirit. Perhaps, therefore, in a woman the Animus is more akin to a Hero than a Muse. This is appropriate, since in theurgy it is the Heroes who aid the ascent in opposition to the *hylic daimôns* (daimôns of matter).

Like all gods and daimôns, the Anima or Animus may possess or project, both of which are common in relations with the opposite sex. For these reasons it is important for people to be in touch with their Anima or Animus, but also for the purpose of establishing an alliance with the psychopomp, who may be a guide into the divine realm. This is especially a task for the second half of life, when the Higher Self (that is, the One) urges the psyche to reclaim its neglected parts — the ἐπιστροφή or turn toward unity; that is, the One calls us to ally ourselves with the divine and to put ourselves in service of Πρόνοια. (See E. Jung, 1957, and C. G. Jung, *CW* 9, pt. 2, ch. 3, for more on the Animus/Anima.)

### **Which "Ideas" or "Forms" are Archetypal?**

On the basis of the preceding discussion, we can answer the perennial question of whether there are Platonic Ideas for unappealing things, such as mud. We have seen that the eternal, universal Ideas are the archetypes of our species, defined in the human genotype (and laws of nature). What these archetypal Ideas are, *specifically*, is an empirical question, but Jungian psychology, comparative mythology, and related disciplines, provide some answers. Certainly the archetypal Ideas include a pantheon of gods, but which pantheon? I'll address this question later. In addition, as we've seen, the Forms include the archetypal numbers, that is, the monad, dyad, triad, and so forth.

### **The Evolving Archetypes**

We have seen how evolutionary neuroethology explains the function of the archetypes in a species' behavior, but I have put off until now the implications of

evolution for our understanding of the archetypes. Since the human genome evolves, so also must the archetypal Ideas, but we must consider carefully what this means, and avoid several common pitfalls. In particular, we must avoid *essentialism*, the notion that there is an “ideal kind” for each species. We have seen that the archetypal Ideas, common to all people, are implicit in the human genome. Therefore it is natural to view the human genome as representing an ideal human kind, the essence of *Homo sapiens*. Individual humans might be considered imperfect images of this ideal to the extent that their genotype differs from the genomic ideal. This would certainly be a very Platonic way of looking at things, but modern biologists have rejected it for a variety of good reasons.

In modern evolutionary biology the genome is considered a kind of statistical average of the individual genotypes belonging to a species at a given time. Therefore, the genome is a mathematical abstraction (that is, an Aristotelian abstraction from particulars), rather than an eternal Platonic essence. As before, a species is defined as a population of individuals that are potentially able to interbreed (subject to sex constraints), but this has proven to be a much more fluid concept than previously supposed. On one hand, individuals traditionally classified in the same species may not interbreed for a variety of reasons; on the other, individuals of supposedly different species have been found to interbreed (Milner 1990, 414, 438). Therefore, as the population changes through time, so does the genome, for it is just an average over the population. The genome is not a fixed essence, but a time-varying form; otherwise, the whole concept of the evolution of species would be inconceivable. (For more on the revolutionary shift in biology from essentialism to “population thinking,” see Mayr 1982.)

Now we must apply the population definition of the genome to our understanding of the archetypal Ideas. We have seen that the human genome at a given time is defined over a population existing at that time. That is, the genome is defined by the set of participated genotypes. During sexual reproduction a new DNA molecule is assembled from the DNA of the parents; the new molecule participates in a (previously unparticipated) genotype, and thus alters the genome minutely. Similarly, each death alters the genome. Thus the evolution of the genome, as statistical average, is mediated by processes in the natural world. As a consequence, the universal archetypal Ideas, at a given time, must be conceived as a sort of average of the archetypal Ideas as experienced by all humans living at that time. Since mating is a process that takes place in nature (albeit under the guidance of the gods), and death is also a natural event, the changing participation of genotypes, and thus the evolution of the genome, is mediated by the material world. That is, matter is necessary to the evolution of the archetypal Ideas.

Thus, in contradiction to Neoplatonic tradition, we must conclude that some archetypal Ideas do change, albeit at slow, evolutionary timescales. These slow revolutions in the heavens may be symbolized by the turning of the astrological ages, from Aries, to Pisces, to Aquarius, and so forth. Indeed, Wilson (1978, 88) observes that significant change in human nature can occur in about 100 generations, which is not so different from an astrological age (about 2200 years).

Moreover, it is important to recognize the essential role played by individual living persons in the turning of the ages. In this sense, the gods are not completely impassive; mortals do have an effect on them, although the effect of each individual is

small. (In biological terms, each individual has a very small effect on the evolution of the species.) I think this recognition of the role of embodied life — generation — in the constitution and evolution of the archetypal Ideas is an important modern correction to the tradition of disembodied idealism associated with Plato. (We may also note that evolution depends on random processes, such as mutation, crossover, and genetic drift, which correspond to the Indefinite Dyad.)

So must we exclaim πάντα ῥεῖ and agree with Heraclitus that Pythagoras had much learning but little understanding (fr. 40)? I think not.

The human genome evolves, and therefore so do the personified gods. However, we have seen that behind the gods are the divine numbers, the more abstract, impersonal archetypal Ideas, which are the psychical aspects of natural law. In particular, although there is still much that we do not know, we can see in principle how evolution must take place in living systems, and that in fact evolution, in some form, is a necessary consequence of natural law. Therefore, even though the human species is not fixed, the laws that govern its evolution are eternal. Beyond the personified archetypes, that is, the gods, who appear invariant across the centuries but evolve slowly through the ages, beyond them we may glimpse the truly eternal archetypal Ideas that govern divine evolution and everything else in nature.

We must conclude that there are two realms of archetypal Ideas. The higher realm, that of impersonal psychical forces (e.g., archetypal numbers), is strictly eternal. The lower realm, that of the personified gods, is effectively eternal, but actually slowly changing across the cosmic ages through interaction with embodied life (that is, through evolution by natural selection). Jung also recognized evolution in the archetypal realm (Stevens 1982, 75). Although it might seem that we should evict the gods from the Empyrium, the realm of Platonic Ideas, we must acknowledge that they are central to human life in spite of, indeed because of, their co-evolution with humans. Rather, we should understand them as falling into place between the eternal impersonal archetypal Ideas, and the time- and space-bound personal daimôns.

### **Are the Gods Good?**

Ancient intellectuals protested the immoral behavior of the gods in the traditional myths. For example, Pindar (*Oly.* IX) says, “Hateful is the poets’ lore that speaks slander against the gods.” And in the *Theaetetus* (176b) we read, “In God there is no sort or kind of unrighteousness.” Plotinus (VI.25) identified the Good with the One, and although other Neoplatonists identified the Good with lesser hypostases, it is still high in the hierarchy. What can evolutionary neuroethology and Jungian psychology tell us about this issue?

The archetypal structures encoded in the human genome have conferred selective advantage on our species in its environment of evolutionary adaptedness. They have promoted the survival of our species, and in this abstract sense, the anthropomorphic gods may be called “good” for humans. However, I think it is more accurate to consider the gods to be “beyond good and evil.” This is the conclusion of Jungian psychology, and less likely to mislead us than highly rarified notions of “the Good.” The gods serve their own ends, which may not be ours, and their inclinations may not conform to contemporary standards of morality, or promote our individual interests.



Further, we must not forget that behind the gods are the unpersonified archetypal Ideas, which correspond to natural and mathematical law, and which cannot be called “good” even in the sense of promoting *H. sapiens*. It is extremely parochial, I think, to suppose that universal Providence is directed toward what we take to be the well being of one species on one small planet, let alone toward the individual interests of you or me.

Finally, we cannot forget that the archetypal gods may be in conflict. In biological terms, a stimulus may trigger conflicting instincts, such a fight and flight; in psychological terms, we may find ourselves in the grips of incompatible archetypes, warring gods or daimôns; such an existential dilemma is represented in the Judgment of Paris. Deities may have differing demands, and there may be no ethical basis for choosing among them. Our best option may be to negotiate with them to find a resolution balancing all their demands, for which theurgy can be useful.

Nevertheless, wisdom is living in harmony with divine Providence (our “phylogenetic destiny”), for this is what gives meaning and significance to life, and so we must contemplate what that entails (Stevens 1982, 140–2, 293–5).

### **Who are the Gods?**

As is well known, the personified archetypal Ideas are represented in the pantheons of the polytheistic religions, but these pantheons, as we know them from art, literature, and anthropology, also incorporate much that is culturally relative. Is there any way we can know the gods common to all humans, independent of these accidents? The Jungian psychologist Anthony Stevens (1982; 1993) has some important insights.

Stevens observes that humans have spent over 99.5% of the 200-thousand-year history of *H. sapiens* as hunter-gatherers; this is our environment of evolutionary adaptedness (see also Wilson 1978, 84). Thus, we should expect our instincts, and therefore the archetypes corresponding to them, to be the perceptual-behavioral structures that have conferred selective advantage on our Paleolithic hunter-gatherer ancestors (Stevens 1993, 64). Further, in the comparatively short time (less than ten thousand years) since our ancestors began to abandon this *modus vivendi*, there has not been much opportunity for major evolutionary change (four archetypal “ages”). As E. O. Wilson (1978, 34) says,

Although genetic evolution of some kind continued during this latter, historical sprint, it cannot have fashioned more than a tiny fraction of the traits of human nature. Otherwise surviving hunter-gatherer people would differ genetically to a significant degree from people in advanced industrial nations, but this is demonstrably not the case.

Finally, as Stevens (1982, 48) remarks,

An archetypal system, once it has evolved as a characteristic of a given species, breeds true as long as the species exists, and does not disappear with disuse.

Therefore, our archetypal Ideas (gods) are largely the same as those of our Paleolithic hunter-gatherer ancestors. (Thus, the mythological *illud tempus* may be translated “one-hundred thousand years ago”!)

One way of discovering these gods is by psychological and mythological studies, such as Jung and his followers have conducted, as well as by the related theurgical techniques that I’ll discuss shortly. Another way of learning about them is through

anthropological studies of contemporary hunting-gathering communities, so that we may understand the sort of behavioral patterns that facilitate their survival. According to some anthropologists, these communities typically have 40 to 50 members, comprising six to ten adult men, ten to twenty child-bearing women, and perhaps twenty infants and children. These are kinship groups structured around families, which need not be monogamous. The members of such groups have common beliefs and practices, and periodically encounter other similar groups, for purposes of marriage and warfare — love and strife, as we might say — as well as for other reasons. Perhaps we can see such a group in the background of the Olympian clan — before they became so exalted! The Golden Age of Kronos also comes to mind. (See Fox 1989; Stevens 1982, 67; Wilson 1978, 82-6.)

These circumstances present humans with an ethical challenge (Stevens 1982, 240). Most of us are not hunter-gatherers and few would advocate a general return to that lifestyle. Nevertheless, their archetypal Ideas are also ours, a fundamental fact of our human nature. Since “Psychopathology results from the frustration of archetypal goals” (Stevens 1993, 86), we are ill-advised to ignore our ancestral archetypes (Stevens 1982, 122). “The archetypes will not allow us to deny them for long” (Stevens 1982, 240). So the challenge for φιλοσοφία — philosophy as a way of life — is to conduct our modern lives in harmony with the gods of Paleolithic hunter-gatherers (Stevens 1993, 67–70). How can this be accomplished? “To gain access to the archetypal world, to begin to know the unknowable, is at least a beginning” (Stevens 1993, 119–20). To this end, theurgy may be helpful.

## V. Theurgy

I’ll briefly review the main techniques of theurgy from the perspectives of Jungian psychology and neuroethology.<sup>4</sup> As is well known, dreams provide access to the archetypal and daimonic realms (Johnson 1986; Jung 1997), and so dream incubation was common in the ancient world as it is in modern analytic psychology (Meier 1967). Because it is relatively familiar, I will not discuss it here.

### Συνθήματα and Σύμβολα

In order to discuss theurgy, we must begin with the συνθήματα and σύμβολα, the so-called “signs and symbols,” with which theurgy operates. Originally these terms referred to means of recognition: a potshard was broken in half and the pieces given to two parties. Later, when the two pieces were brought together and the whole restored, recognition occurred, bridging the familiar and the unfamiliar, thereby establishing trust. So also in psychology, a symbol transcends differences and creates a connection between the known and the unknown, most commonly between ego consciousness and the unconscious, thereby establishing meaning (Jung *CW* 9, pt. 2, ¶280; Stevens 1982, 242, 273).

In neuroethological terms, symbols are the many releasing stimuli that can activate an archetype or complex and cause it to manifest in experience with consequent possession and projection. Some of these stimuli are “unconditioned,” that is, instinctual,

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<sup>4</sup> Surveys of ancient theurgical techniques can be found in Lewy (1978, chh. III, IV), Majercik (1989, 21–46), and Shaw (1995, pt. III).

part of the universal archetype; they are, so to speak, in the *σειρά* (chord or line) of the god. Others are “conditioned,” that is, a result of individual experience, and thus mediated by personal daimōns. Intermediate between these extremes we may place cultural symbols (culturally conditioned stimuli), the operation of which is mediated by the daimōns of groups. Whatever their origin, by activating archetypes and complexes, these *σύμβολα* and *συνθήματα* invoke the gods and daimōns and invite them to possess and/or project.

### Τελεστική

The theurgical practice called *τελεστική* is a means of *ἐμψύχωσις*, ensoulment or “animation,” of a sacred image (*ἄγαλμα*), such as a statue. It is accomplished by placing in or on the image appropriate *sunthēmata*, including stones, plants, animals, scents, and figures. These material *sunthēmata* are supplemented by immaterial *sunthēmata*, such as invocations, chants, and prayers intended to “persuade” the god or daimōn to descend into the image.

Of course, as Iamblichus explains (*De myst.* 47, 6), theurgy does not compel a deity or daimōn; rather it prepares a suitable *δοχή* (receptacle or receiver). This is like preparing an object to better reflect a particular color of light; a golden object does not “compel” yellow light to appear, but it allows the presence of the yellow in white light to become manifest. Similarly, although the archetype is ever present, it is not normally manifest to consciousness. Therefore appropriate *sunthēmata* (i.e., symbols linked to a complex or archetype) invite projection of the daimōn or god onto the image, which becomes numinous. In this way, the theurgist is in a conscious archetypal relation with the divinity, and the image becomes a medium for interaction, that is, for exploring specific archetypes and complexes residing in the unconscious.

### Δεσμός

Another theurgical operation is *δεσμός* (“binding”), in which a *κλήτωρ* (caller) invokes a god or daimōn to possess another person, called the *δοχεύς* (recipient), *θεατής* (seer), or *κάταχος* (held-down one). In principle this process is similar to the ensoulment of an image, but in this case the “tuned receiver” is a person. It has the advantage that, by accepting the projection and becoming possessed, a human recipient can embody an autonomous divine personality better than an inanimate object can. A “pure receptacle” will manifest the archetype with minimal contamination from their own complexes.

By activating the archetypes in the recipient, the mortal participates in the god’s *ἐνέργεια*, that is, the divine actualization or activity; in this way the recipient is possessed and can speak for the god.

Children and naïve individuals are more likely to accept projections and become possessed, so they are traditionally recommended as recipients. Also, they are more likely to be good recipients because their egos and personal daimōns are less likely to contaminate the interaction. Nevertheless, being a seer is partly a practiced skill, which includes the ability to quiet the conscious ego and the personal daimōns. The experienced *θεατής* may be called a “pure receiver” or “empty receptacle”; they are said to have *ἐπιτηδιότης* (fitness) and *ἱερατική δύναμις* (hieratic power).

During the trance, the recipient may or may not be conscious of what transpires. However, since the god is “in” both the caller and receiver, both projection and possession are typical; the caller will see and the receiver will feel the god’s presence.

### Σύστασις

A common practice in Jungian analysis is *active imagination*, in which a person engages in dialogue and negotiation with an archetype or complex (Johnson 1986; Jung 1997). This is closely related to the theurgical practice of σύστασις, or liaison, with a god or daimôn in order to establish an alliance with it. As in the previous operations, *symbola* and *sunthêmata* may be used to activate the archetype or complex; often the symbols are suggested by dream imagery. Σύστασις may also employ a human or nonhuman receiver, including an animal, plant, or nonliving thing, to receive the projections, but no concrete receiver is required.

Encounters with daimôns are more common than those with gods (since daimôns are nearer to the ego), and such daimôns may serve as intermediaries for their ruling god. Spirits engaged in σύστασις are not always truthful about their identity (or other things) for gods and daimôns are “beyond good and evil.” Therefore, theurgists are very concerned with discerning the identities of the spirits they evoke (e.g. Iamblichus *De myst.* Bk. II). Similarly, one is advised to maintain a conscious ethical stance in active imagination (since that is, in fact, part of the function of ego consciousness: Johnson 1986, 189–95).

Active imagination allows a person to interact with archetypes and personal complexes and to engage them in a critical dialogue concerning their desires, functions, and potential gifts. In this way one may benefit by living in accord with archetypal reality and avoid futile attempts to deny the archetypes and complexes. Further, psychological individuation proceeds by conscious integration of these otherwise unconscious personalities. In theurgical terms, συστάσεις are important for acquiring familiarity with the archetypal realm and for bringing the theurgist into the ἐνέργεια of a god, in order to turn toward its essence and be actualized in it. In this way theurgists may learn the will of the god so that they may act in better accord with it. Συστάσεις are also important for negotiating with personal daimôns, who may otherwise possess others or ourselves in undesirable ways. Finally, a daimôn may be recruited as πάρεδρος (familiar spirit or assistant) to help in various ways, including in the theurgical ascent.

### Ἀναγωγή

The last theurgical operation that I want to mention is the most important, the ἀναγωγή or theurgical ascent. In all the preceding, the divinity is experienced as “other,” but in the ἀναγωγή the theurgist ascends so that their soul, so far as possible, unites with the god; that is, they experience deification. The union may be with an individual god, especially the Demiurge, or more rarely with the Inexpressible One. (Porphyry, *V. Pl.* 23, tells us Plotinus achieved it four times while they were together.) In the latter case, by this contact with the Higher Self and by uniting with the archetypal Ἄνθρωπος, the theurgist is better enabled to live a fulfilling life in accord with Πρόνοια. That is, at least for a time, the theurgist experiences themselves as a psychical whole, integrating the conscious, personal unconscious, and collective unconscious minds.

The operation makes ritual use of *sumbola* and *sunthêmata* in order to activate the archetypes. These may facilitate the process of ascent when a more interior, contemplative approach, such as Plotinus advocates, is not effective. The *sunthêmata* may be classified as physical (substances, scents, and so forth), as audible (such as chants, hymns, and ὀνόματα βάρβαρα or magic words), and as mental or noetic (such as silent prayers). All of these are effective for activating the archetypal Idea.

“Like knows like,” so in the ἀναγωγή the parts of the soul that are most like the One (or the intended god) must be separated from those least like it. Therefore the conscious and personal unconscious minds must be quieted; that is, the ego and other personal daimôns must be pacified. Separation is accomplished by the initiate enacting a symbolic θάνατος αὐθαίρετος (voluntary death), which therefore functions as a sensible *symbolon*. Death-and-Resurrection is an archetypal Idea; therefore, through symbolic death and ascent the initiate participates in this Idea’s ἐνέργεια and actualizes it in themselves (i.e., the archetype manifests in them).

The hylic daimôns, whose office it is to bring the archetypal Ideas into physical manifestation, must be pacified and opposed. To this end, Heroes, recruited as πάρεδροι or assisting spirits, may be helpful in this reversion. In psychological terms, properly constellated complexes may lead the way to the archetypes.

## VI. Conclusions

It will be apparent that there are many loose ends in what I’ve said, but I hope the basic theses are correct. Of course, the trouble with interdisciplinary arguments, such as mine, is that they have something for everyone to attack! Hence, Jungian psychologists may be unhappy with an apparent reduction of psychical reality to material phenomena. Evolutionary neuroethologists may be unhappy to see their scientific theories tainted with the supposed mysticism of Jungian psychology and Neoplatonism. Neoplatonists, in turn, may be unhappy to see this philosophy “psychologized” on one hand, and apparently reduced to biology on the other. However, there is no cause for these concerns, as they all result from misapprehensions of my proposal.

Mind and matter, which correspond to πέρας and τὸ ἄπειρον, Limit and the Unlimited, should be understood as two sides of the same Inexpressible One. Thus, since Jungian psychology and evolutionary neuroethology are describing two aspects of the same phenomena, each may inform and reinforce the other. Both reconcile Neoplatonism with contemporary science, and confirm its basic insights and practices, while suggesting resolutions of some issues. In fact, the three hang together, like the three faces of Hekate, into a consistent body of theory and practice.

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