

EVOLUTIONARY NEUROTHEOLOGY  
AND JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY  
(REVISED & EXTENDED VERSION, 2008)\*  
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**ABSTRACT**

My goal is to outline an evolutionary neuropsychological and neurophenomenological foundation for spiritual and religious experiences. Central to this account are concepts from archetypal psychology, which, on the one hand, explain the structure of common religious experiences, but, on the other, are grounded in ethology and evolutionary biology. From this it follows that certain religious phenomena are objective, in that they are empirical, stable, and public. As a consequence, certain theological claims can be objectively confirmed or refuted. However, it would be a mistake to assume that this approach reduces religious experiences to the “merely psychological” or considers them inessential epiphenomena in a materialist universe. On the contrary, I will show that it demonstrates the compatibility and even inevitability of transcendental religious experience—and its crucial importance—to biological beings such as ourselves. (Appendices further address the neuropsychology of religious experience, the spiritual dimensions of science and mathematics, and ancient Greek spiritual practices.)

**I. OVERVIEW**

How can we achieve a unified understanding of the universe, which comprehends the physical, psychical, and spiritual dimensions of reality? In this paper I will argue that the archetypes, as described in the psychological theories of Jung and his followers, provide the crucial link between the material and spiritual worlds: on the one hand, they are grounded in evolutionary neuropsychology; on the other, from a phenomenological perspective they are the objective constituents of the spiritual world. This might seem to reduce the spiritual realm to the “merely psychological,” or even to neural epiphenomena, but I will argue that this is a misinterpretation of the theory, and that in an important sense the gods (or God) are objectively real and crucially important for meaningful human life.

In brief, I will proceed as follows. In the next section I will review the main ideas of archetypal psychology, but emphasizing their evolutionary basis (drawing upon Stevens, 1982, 1993, 2003). Section III explores the religious implications of the archetypes in the context of their material embodiment. In the appendices I will review possible neuropsychological bases of religious experience, their implications for mathematics and science, and ancient Greek spiritual practices.

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\* This paper is an extended and revised version of MacLennan (2003), to which I have added appendices drawn from other publications.

## II. EVOLUTION AND THE ARCHETYPES

### A. *Ethology and the Structure of Behavior*

All animal species exhibit characteristic behavioral patterns, commonly called instincts. These behaviors are served by perceptual systems, which are also characteristic of the species. These perceptual-behavioral structures, which are common to all members of a species, change very slowly, on evolutionary timescales, as the species continues to adapt to its (possibly changing) natural environment. The functions of these perceptual-behavioral structures must be understood in the context of the species' *environment of evolutionary adaptedness* (EEA), that is, the environment in which it has historically evolved and therefore to which it is adapted. One of the contributions of modern ethology, as developed especially by Konrad Lorenz and Niko Tinbergen in the mid-twentieth century, was to recognize that the meaning and function of behavior cannot be understood outside of this environment.

A species' genotype defines a characteristic life-cycle pattern for each member of the species as it progresses from birth to death. However, the phylogenetic pattern of the species is expressed ontogenetically by an individual's development in and interaction with its particular environment, which may differ more or less from the environment of evolutionary adaptedness. (This is especially the case for modern humans, as will be discussed later.)

Species-characteristic perceptual-behavioral patterns are encoded in the structure of the brain, which is a result of the developmental program encoded in the genome. Various behavioral patterns (e.g., mating behaviors) may be *potentiated* at appropriate stages in an animal's development (e.g., sexual maturity), but they are *activated* through an *innate releasing mechanism* (IRM) by means of a *releaser* or *sign stimulus* (e.g., an estrus-related pheromone).

The human species is also characterized by genotypic perceptual-behavioral structures. Which specific structures are phylogenetic characteristics of our species ("nature"), and how they are ontogenetically modified by an individual's development in his or her particular environment ("nurture"), should be left to empirical research, and not prejudged by psycho-socio-political ideology. For my argument, it is sufficient to acknowledge that *Homo sapiens*, like other animal species, has characteristic perceptual-behavioral structures.

### B. *Archetypal Psychology and the Structure of the Psyche*

Ethology studies species-characteristic perceptual-behavioral structures "from the outside," that is, by observing animals' behavior in their natural environment. However, when *we* are the animal in question, we may ask how these perceptual-behavioral structures are experienced "from the inside." The corresponding psychological structures are what Jung called *archetypes*: "To the extent that the archetypes intervene in the shaping of conscious contents by regulating, modifying, and motivating them, they act like the instincts" (Jung, *CW* 8, ¶404).

The archetypes are often confused with innate images, but Jung was explicit, especially in his later work (e.g., *CW* 9, pt. 1, ¶155), that they are not images, but dynamical

structures of perception, motivation, and behavior. They do not become images until they structure conscious content after being activated by a sign stimulus or other cause. The archetype “is not meant to denote an inherited idea, but rather an inherited mode of functioning, ... a ‘pattern of behavior’” (Jung, *CW* 18, ¶1228).

The archetypes reside in the *collective unconscious*, for the archetypes are unconscious until they are activated, and they are collective in that they are common to all humans. Although this idea is surrounded by much mysticism, “The hypothesis of the collective unconscious is, therefore, no more daring than to assume that there are instincts” (Jung, *CW* 9, pt. 1, ¶91). In addition to the collective unconscious, we each have a *personal unconscious*, which is a result of our individual ontogenies in our particular environments (more later on this process).

Like the instincts to which they correspond, archetypes are *potentiated* at particular developmental stages in accord with a phylogenetically determined life-cycle (the human life-cycle). When an appropriate releaser (sign stimulus) occurs in the environment, the archetype is *actualized*, and begins its work of structuring conscious perception and of influencing motivation and behavioral disposition. Because the releaser is keyed into the archetype, the triggering situation or relationship is perceived as numinous and significant; the psyche is reoriented toward (evolutionarily) appropriate action. As examples, consider encountering a sexually exciting person or being confronted by a threatening, angry person.

*Complexes*, which are webs of associations, are created by intense or repeated activation of an archetype in the ontogenetic psyche; therefore they have personal material surrounding an archetypal core. Complexes normally reside in the personal unconscious, but when activated, they can intrude on consciousness by influencing perception, motivation, and behavior. We tend to think of complexes as pathological, but it important to understand that they are normal components of our psyches; indeed some are essential for our normal functioning, as will be explained in the next subsection. They are “the functional units of which the ontogenetic psyche [is] composed” (Stevens, 1982, p. 65). Both archetypal actualization and complex formation follow the laws of association: the law of similarity and the law of contiguity (Stevens, 1982, p. 65). That is, associations, which constitute complexes and activate archetypes, are formed on the basis of similarity or co-occurrence.

The thwarting of “archetypal intent” can nucleate pathological complexes. Thus Stevens’ “Fourth Law of Psychodynamics” says, “Psychopathology results from the frustration of archetypal goals” (Stevens, 1993, p. 86). However, this does not imply that archetypes should govern our behavior; rather, our moral problem is “what *attitude* we adopt to these fundamental *a priori* aspects of our nature—how we live them, and how we mediate them to the group. It is the ethical orientation that counts.” (Stevens, 1982, p. 240)

### *C. Some Specific Archetypes*

It will be worthwhile to review some of the archetypal structures identified by Jung and his colleagues. Readers familiar with archetypal psychology might want to skim the remainder of this section.<sup>1</sup>

One of the fundamental archetypal relations for all primates is that between mother and child. As the newborn infant begins to discriminate itself from its environment, the archetypal child-parent axis forms (the foundation of the ego-Self axis, discussed later). With greater awareness the child-parent axis differentiates into the child-mother axis and, from the child's perspective, the *Mother* archetype is actualized. Among many other things, the archetypal Mother symbolizes the source of care; she expresses home and family (the *Eros principle* and the *centripetal* orientation of the ego).

Later, as the father assumes a more important role, the *Father* archetype is actualized as one pole of the archetypal relationship between father and child. He is especially the source of order and mediates the outward relation to society and the rest of the world (the *Logos principle* and the *centrifugal* orientation of the ego).

As the child's sexual identity develops (as early as eighteen months), the *contrasexual* (opposite sex) characteristics remain undeveloped in the unconscious (analogous to contrasexual physical attributes after puberty: e.g., a man's breasts, a woman's clitoris). The contrasexual part in the female psyche is called the *Animus* (Latin for spirit, thought, will), and in the male is called the *Anima* (Lat., soul, vital principle). The contrasexual part exists both as an archetype, conditioned by biological development, and as a complex, conditioned by the environment. That is, the Anima/Animus is partly phylogenetic and partly ontogenetic; it is a sequential elaboration of the Mother or Father archetype.

There are many other archetypes, most of which are familiar from mythology (e.g., Maiden, Wise Old Man, Trickster), but they do not need to be discussed at this time. Although mythologists and archetypal psychologists are inclined to classify and name them, it is important to remember that they are connected into a continuum or continuous "field" in which there are real distinctions, but also borderline cases (von Franz, 1974, ch. 8).

The archetypal field as a whole is called the *Self*, which is therefore the sum total of human archetypes. As such it is the psychological aspect of the perceptual-behavioral structure encoded in the human genome, and hence it constitutes the "phylogenetic destiny" of the psyche. "The self is our life's goal, for it is the greatest expression of that fateful combination we call individuality" (Jung, *CW* 7, ¶404).

The Self is unconscious as well as conscious, and therefore must be carefully distinguished from ego-consciousness, discussed next. "The self is not only the center but also the whole circumference which embraces both consciousness and unconscious; it is the center of this totality, just as the ego in the center of the conscious mind" (Jung, *CW* 7, ¶274).

The *Ego* is the individual conscious mind, a complex that perhaps evolved to facilitate our adaptation to the environment, and is responsible for actualizing the life-cycle

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<sup>1</sup>I am using the term "archetypal psychology" somewhat more broadly than Hillman defined it (1970; see also 1983, ch. 1), because I need to explore the connections to evolutionary neuropsychology.

plan of the Self. Ego-consciousness has its origin in the “Eros of relationship” (starting with the child-mother bond), which creates the Ego-Self axis (Stevens, 1982, pp. 95–6). Although ego-consciousness is crucial to our human nature, we tend to overvalue it, and forget that it is an “organ” evolved to facilitate the human species’ survival in its environment of evolutionary adaptedness. Many spiritual practices (as well as psychotherapeutic practices) are directed toward achieving a proper balance between the Ego and the Self.

The *Persona* (Latin: mask, role, character) is a complex, built on the Ego, that mediates the individual’s adaptation to society. It is the face we present to the world (e.g., through the habitual attitudes and manners of behavior of our class and vocation). “One could say, with a little exaggeration, that the persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is” (Jung, *CW* 9, pt. 1, ¶221). Nevertheless, our personas are essential to our functioning as social animals, so long as we avoid the danger of confusing our personas with our Selves.

The *Shadow* comprises all the traits and qualities consciously rejected by the individual and their culture (collective *consciousness*). It is therefore a complicated, multilayered complex comprising material rejected by the individual, by his or her family, and by larger significant groups, up to the culture at large. Like all complexes, it also has an archetypal core, based on an innate predisposition to dichotomize, but perhaps also including a phylogenetic predisposition against certain behaviors (e.g., incest). However, since the Shadow compensates our conscious attitudes (which may be imbalanced), it is not entirely negative.

The *Superego* is the “moral complex,” which is essential to the functioning of society; it has an archetypal core, but is activated by the parents (perhaps through a fear of rejection as a consequence of unacceptable behavior). Human beings have a phylogenetic predisposition to learn rules (linguistic, cultural, social, religious, political), and through it the Superego is built from acquired ethical norms. It governs communication on the Ego-Self axis, that is, it monitors and may inhibit material from coming into consciousness from the unconscious mind.

In the preceding paragraphs I have reviewed some of the most important archetypes and complexes characteristic of human beings, as identified by the empirical investigations of Jung and his successors. However, since ethology has established that some of our human perceptual-behavioral structures are shared with non-human species (e.g., mother-child bonding and social behavior in other primates), it is plausible to suppose that these animals also experience corresponding archetypes, not identical but homologous.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, behind the archetypes that are our common human heritage, we can find others that are common to all primates; beyond these are the archetypes of mammals and of all vertebrates. Thus, to explore completely the structure of the human psyche we must

go back much further, back to the hunter-gatherer existence for which our psyches were formed, back to the archetypal foundations of all human experience, back to the hominid, mammalian, and reptilian ancestors who live on in the structures of our minds and brains. (Stevens, 1993, p.5)

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<sup>2</sup>“Homology refers to similarities between two or more species which are due to shared characteristics inherited from a common evolutionary ancestor ...” (Harré & Lamb, 1986, p. 63).

Can we go even further? Certainly some aspects of the structure of our psyches are consequences of the fact we are living beings, and further, consequences of our being physical systems. As Jung said, “the ‘psychic infra-red’, the biological instinctual psyche, gradually passes over into the physiology of the organism and thus merges with its chemical and physical conditions...” (*CW* 8, ¶420). For example, physical systems of all sorts exhibit characteristic forms of dynamical behavior (equilibrium, cycles, and chaos), which are also characteristic of the psyche and are therefore archetypal.

If we follow this line of reasoning, we are led to conclude that the most fundamental and universal archetypes are the laws of nature (whatever they may be discovered to be) experienced psychically (i.e., “from the inside,” as opposed to through external observation). Therefore, among the most fundamental archetypes are the numbers, considered as qualitative ideas (e.g., unity, dichotomy, conjunction), for number “preconsciously orders both psychic thought processes *and* the manifestations of material reality” (von Franz, 1974, p. 53). And so Jung said, “I have a distinct feeling that number is a key to the mystery, since it is just as much discovered as it is invented” (von Franz, 1974, p. 9). These considerations may seem to stretch the idea of the unconscious too far, but they are necessary if we are to achieve an understanding that embraces the physical, psychical, and spiritual. (See Appendix C for more on the archetypal numbers.)

### III. ARCHETYPAL THEOLOGY

#### A. *The Archetypes and the Gods*

Having reviewed some of the principal archetypes and their evolutionary neuropsychological foundation, I will turn to their theological implications. It is best to begin from a polytheistic perspective, for “archetypal psychology is necessarily nonagnostic and polytheistic” (Hillman, 1975a, p. 226). (The essentially polytheistic nature of archetypal psychology is discussed in detail by Hillman, 1983, ch. 10; see also Miller, 1981.) Nevertheless, my conclusions apply equally well to monotheism, as is explained later.

The archetypes are much bigger than individual people, and therefore no person can completely fulfill an archetype. It is normal to *project* an archetype onto a person (such as projecting the Mother archetype onto your personal mother), but with maturity we retract the projections, and differentiate the real person from the idealized archetype. Nevertheless, the unfulfilled potential of the archetype remains, and we are left with a longing for the idealized figures they represent. Further, the archetypes call for complete actualization (for that is their biological function), and urge us to seek them. Likewise, the sum total of the archetypes, the Self, seeks actualization of the genomic potential of the species in the life of the individual, which gives rise to the drive for fulfillment that Jung called *individuation*.<sup>3</sup>

Once the projections are withdrawn, we realize that the archetypes exist independently of the concrete individuals that may manifest them; or, in other words, we may say that the archetypal structures exist in the genotype independently of the individuals that trigger their innate releasing mechanisms. That is, the archetypes are autonomous; they exist

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<sup>3</sup>See Appendix B for some remarks on the neuropsychology of individuation.

independently of human psyches in the same sense that the human genome exists independently of individual humans.

For example, when the projection of the Mother archetype is withdrawn from the concrete mother, the archetypal Great Mother remains to represent the Eros principle. Similarly the personal father comes to be differentiated from the Heavenly Father as representative of the Logos principle. These are, of course, only two examples (though important ones) of many.

It is well known that the archetypes correspond to the gods of various pantheons, and that mythology often encodes archetypal relationships; there is no need to attempt to summarize here the extensive specific work of many archetypal psychologists (Jung, 1998, may be cited as an introduction). Rather, I will take the identity of god and archetype for granted, and focus on the question of whether the gods are real or “merely psychological.” (Henceforth I will use “archetype” and “god” more or less synonymously.) According to common scientific standards, we may say that the archetypes (the gods) are objectively real phenomena if they are *empirical*, *stable*, and *public*.

The archetypes are *empirical phenomena* in the primary sense of those words because they manifest as appearances (Greek, *phainomena*) that arise in experience (Grk., *empeiria*). The archetypes themselves are not directly experienceable, because they reside as potential perceptual-behavioral structures in the unconscious. However, we experience their effects when they actualize in consciousness, and from these empirical effects we can infer the archetypal structures causing them, but this inference does not make them any less real. “The existence of the instincts can no more be proved than the existence of the archetypes, so long as they do not manifest themselves concretely” (Jung, *CW* 9, pt. 1, ¶155). Science commonly infers, from their effects, causes that are not directly observable (e.g., elementary particles, force fields).

That these experiences need not have external referents, that is, corresponding physical phenomena external to the observer, does not negate their empirical validity. Psychology must take them as givens (Lat., *data*), for its subject matter is the psyche and whatever appears to it (*phainomena*). All sciences, from physics to sociology, are grounded in the experiences (“observations”) of an individual psyche.

The archetypes are *stable* phenomena, another criterion of objective reality. From the earliest recorded mythologies, to the cosmologies of surviving traditional cultures, to the dreams and fantasies of contemporary people, we find the same archetypes recurring across time and place. Indeed, it was this observation that first led Jung to hypothesize the existence of archetypes.

The concept of the archetype ... is derived from the repeated observation that, for instance, the myths and fairy tales of world literature contain definite motifs which crop up everywhere. We meet these same motifs in the fantasies, dreams, deliria, and delusions of individuals living to-day. These typical images and associations are what I call archetypal ideas. (Jung, *CW* 10, ¶847)

The forgoing also shows that the archetypes are *public* phenomena; that is, when suitably trained observers investigate the unconscious, they reach consistent conclusions

about its archetypal structure. (The prerequisite of suitable training is common to all but the simplest sciences; one must learn how to read even a thermometer correctly.) In the case of the archetypes, the appropriate observational techniques are phenomenological and psychoanalytic.

Therefore we may conclude that the archetypes are empirical, stable, and public, which are the accepted scientific standards for the objective reality of a class of phenomena. Hence the archetypes — the gods — are real.

Nevertheless, it's worthwhile to say a little more about the manner of existence of the archetypes, about their *ontological status*. Fortunately, we have some analogous situations to guide us, for if, as has been argued, the archetypes are the psychological aspect of phylogenetically-defined perceptual-behavioral structures, then the archetypes are functions of a human's genotype, which is a mathematical pattern. Therefore the archetypes exist in the same way as other mathematical patterns, as (Platonic) *forms* independent of their physical embodiment (or lack thereof). They are formal, not material.

This conclusion is strengthened by our broadened perspective on the archetypes, which reaches beyond the human species, to non-human species and their underlying physical processes. For these processes are governed by mathematical laws, and therefore their archetypal correspondents in the psyche must be likewise mathematical in structure. Again, the existence of the archetypes (the gods) is akin to the existence of mathematical patterns (forms). The laws of nature (whatever they may be) are what they are, and would be so, even if there were no material universe to obey them. Therefore the archetypes exist independently of physical embodiment (they are immaterial).

That the physical, psychological, and spiritual worlds converge in the realm of mathematical form is not a new idea; it is attributed to Pythagoras, and was developed over two millennia of Platonic, Neoplatonic, and Neopythagorean thought. Indeed, it lurks in the intellectual background of archetypal psychology (Hillman, 1983, pp. 4–5). However, the modern perspective dictates some changes in this venerable theory, which we must consider.<sup>4</sup>

Traditionally, the archetypes have been considered eternal and unchanging, and so they are, from an individual's perspective. However, the archetypes do change slowly with the human genotype, that is to say, at evolutionary timescales. Therefore they have changed little if at all in the last hundred thousand years or more. The deeper archetypal structures are even older (at least four million years for hominids, 55 million years for primates, 500 million for vertebrates); the laws of physics are unchanging and therefore eternal. Thus we can conclude that the archetypes — the gods — change very slowly. Certainly they have not changed in recorded history. Rather, our gods are the same as those of our hunter-gatherer ancestors who lived a hundred thousand years ago.

The reader may grant that the archetypes are objectively real and effectively eternal, but may be reluctant to call them “gods.” To argue that they deserve this appellation requires a discussion of their role in our lives.

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<sup>4</sup>A full discussion of the relation of Neopythagoreanism to evolutionary neurotheology is beyond the scope of this article, but see MacLennan (2004, 2005, 2006b) and Appendix C.



The archetypes are a source of meaning because they integrate individual lives into the greater patterns of humanity and the universe; they give transpersonal meaning and significance to situations and relationships in human life. From an ethological perspective humans are primed, through innate releasing mechanisms, to respond in characteristic ways to the corresponding releasers (sign stimuli). When such a pattern of perception and behavior is released, the individual fulfills part of his or her destiny as a member of the human species. From a psychological perspective, the sign stimulus appears charged with significance and meaning; the archetype is activated and appears in consciousness as an archetypal image. When an archetype is actualized, the resulting situation or relationship is experienced as numinous, supernatural, uncanny, hallowed, blessed, or miraculous.

Various stimuli can trigger the activation of an instinct; they may be genetically determined *innate releasing mechanisms* or they may be learned (conditioned stimuli). Similarly, archetypes may be activated in the unconscious mind by either innate symbolic triggers (part of the collective unconscious structure) or learned symbolic associations (part of the personal unconscious structure). As examples, we may take the two archetypal forces identified by the pre-Socratic Pythagorean philosopher Empedocles: Love (*philotês* or *philia*) and Strife (*neikos*), which he associated with the gods Aphrodite and Ares. (More abstractly they are the instincts for cooperation and competition, which are fundamental to many species.)<sup>5</sup>

Certainly being in love is a familiar example of an archetypal situation; everyone has experienced its power to transform perception and behavior. The beloved is surrounded by a numinous aura, and the relationship is charged with meaning. Therefore, it is not surprising that the ancients saw the hand of a god (Aphrodite or Eros) in such relationships. Indeed, “Aphrodite” and “Venus” were sometimes used as common nouns meaning sexual love, desire, and charm, and Eros (love, desire) was worshipped as a god from an early period (Hornblower & Spawforth, 1996, s.v. Eros). Plato (*Phaedrus* 245b–c) famously classified love (*erôs*) as a kind of divine madness (*theia mania*). Thus, “Love is not a thing sent from heaven for the advantage of both lover and beloved”; rather “this sort of madness is a gift of the gods, fraught with the highest bliss” (*Phaedrus*, loc. cit.). Significantly, Plato claimed that love stems from the “recollection” (*anamnêsis*) of the eternal forms (*eidê*), acquired before birth; in our terms, love is an actualization of certain innate archetypal patterns.

From a behavioral perspective, we may say that the perception or thought of a sexually attractive person may activate a mating instinct, which influences perception and behavior in accord with its evolutionary purpose (i.e., its selective advantage in our EEA). From a psychological perspective, an archetype is activated, which structures conscious content in ways characteristic of this archetype. In particular, since this archetype governs interactions between people, archetypal roles will be projected on the participants. There is more, of course, to human love than the mating instinct (for it includes all sorts of affiliative and cooperative behavior), but this instinct illuminates the evolutionary basis of the archetypes.

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<sup>5</sup>This paragraph adapted from MacLennan (2006b).

In opposition to Love, according to Empedocles, is Strife, which also corresponds to a fundamental archetypal-instinctual structure. Part of this structure is involved in power-seeking and competitive behavior, which serves to establish a dominance hierarchy in many species of mammals and birds. “This makes for social cohesion and cooperation and contributes to the competitive efficiency and survival of the group” (Stevens, 1998, p. 324). Further, Stevens conjectures that this instinctual system provides the archetypal structure for all pursuit of “higher things,” including “truth, beauty, consciousness, or God” (Stevens, 1998, p. 325), and he considers its role in individuation. On the one hand, power-seeking and competitive behavior contribute to a person’s discharge of their “biological obligations” in the first half of life, which solidifies the foundation for individuation in the second half (see also Jacobi, 1967). On the other, however, there is “much more than mere status-enhancement” to individuation (Stevens, 1998, p. 325), and indeed ego inflation impedes the process; nevertheless this structure underlies the desire, aspiration, striving, and symbolism of the spiritual “ascent to the One,” for the goal of individuation is submission of the ego to the Self (Apps. B, D, E).

Therefore, both Love and Strife are essential to the spiritual quest, as evident in such myths as that of Orpheus (Stevens, 1998, pp. 46–52). (For more on the biological importance of the archetypal systems underlying cooperative and competitive behavior — Love and Strife, affiliation and rank — see Stevens, 1998, pp. 45–6, 53–60.)<sup>6</sup>

Thus, in general, when we are in an archetypal situation, we are under the influence or compulsion of a god. That is, we are drawn into the narrative of a phylogenetic “script” (which does not imply, of course, that we have no control over the situation); we may feel like we are living a myth (as, indeed, we are).

There are two poles to the archetypal relation: the experiencing ego and the “other” towards which the perceptual-behavioral “script” is directed. The entire relationship is divinely (archetypally) guided, and each pole may be experienced as inspired by a god. The ego may experience itself as “possessed” by a divinity (Eros, in the preceding example), whose intentions may conflict with the ego’s. Similarly, the “other” (often a person) may be perceived as divine, numinous, magical, or radiant. For example, the beloved is experienced as a god or goddess:

first there come upon him a shuddering and a measure of that awe which the vision inspired, and the reverence as at the sight of a god, and but for fear of being deemed a very madman he would offer sacrifice to his beloved, as to a holy image of deity. (*Phaedrus* 251a)

Of course, the beloved is not a god or goddess. People are not archetypes, and the practical difficulties of treating them as such are well known. In psychological terms, we should withdraw the projection; although the archetypal relation is authentic, we cannot forget that an archetype cannot be manifested completely by an individual; the archetype may touch a human, but it is superhuman and resides elsewhere.

It is even more dangerous to confuse oneself with a deity, the ancient sin of hubris, the psychological condition of *ego inflation*. “Possession” by a divinity is not necessarily a bad thing (who would reject the divine madness of love?) — another word for it is in-

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<sup>6</sup>The preceding three paragraphs are adapted from MacLennan (2006b).

spiration (Grk., *entheos*, “having the god within”) — but it is crucial to be consciously aware of what is taking place (an archetypal actualization), nor should one abandon the “ethical orientation” of the ego.

### ***B. Morality and the Gods***

Are the gods good? Ancient theologians debated the topic. The traditional mythology did not present them as moral ideals, for “Homer and Hesiod have ascribed to the gods all things that among men are a shame and a reproach — theft and adultery and deceiving one another” (Xenophanes, DK 21B11). Popular belief tended to agree, but intellectuals were more inclined to think that the gods must be good. “Hateful is the poets’ lore that speaks slander against the gods” (Pindar, *Olympian IX*). So also Euripides has his characters say, “I do not believe that any divinity is evil” and, “If gods do anything base, they are no gods” (*Iph. Taur.*, 380; *Beller.*, fr. 292). Plato says, “In God there is no sort or kind of unrighteousness” (*Theae.*, 176b), and simply, “God is good” (e.g., *Rep.*, 379b).

If we take the ethological perspective on the problem, we can say that archetypal structures have evolved by conferring selective advantage to humans in our environment of evolutionary adaptedness; in this broad sense, they can be called “good.” But does that make them moral ideals? Certainly, the archetypes are real forces, which cannot be ignored or thwarted with impunity; psychopathologies result from “frustrating archetypal goals” (see Section II.B above). But few would advocate that we blindly follow our biological urges.

Furthermore, the gods may have differing demands, and may even war with one another. At least that was the view of traditional mythology and epic, which, again, the intellectuals found unacceptable. “Cease from this vain babbling; far from the Immortals leave all war and strife,” Pindar said (*Ol. IX*). However, ethology teaches us again that the traditional view was more accurate. An animal may find itself in the grips of two incompatible patterns of behavior (fight or flight is an obvious example); ethologists say that it is in a state of *conflict*. Psychologically we may find ourselves in the grip of incompatible archetypes (gods), each urging toward the fulfillment of its own purpose. So three goddesses appeared to Paris, each pushing him to fulfill her own archetypal plan. From a theological perspective, we may be placed in real existential dilemmas. Gods cannot be disobeyed without dire consequences, yet in a case of archetypal conflict we are faced with reconciling warring deities. In facing such a dilemma, it is not simply a matter of choosing good over evil, for each of the gods is good in the sense that they serve the species (and, beyond that, life in general). They each have a legitimate claim on us.

More accurately, I think, the gods should be considered “beyond good and evil.” Psychologically, all archetypes are positive and negative, because they are prior to conscious discrimination, and therefore prior to human morality. Hence, Aphrodite causes us to love our spouses and to start families, but also urges us to extramarital affairs. Ares encourages us to strike when we’re angry, but also to defend our homeland. The clever words granted us by Hermes can win support for a just cause, or they can cheat and deceive. The Sky Father Zeus enforces laws and rules, but sometimes to the point of cruelty. The Great Mother nurtures her children, but may smother or even devour them. And so on, for all the other gods.

In my examples, I have drawn from Greek mythology, as is often done in archetypal psychology, because of its seminal role in Western culture. Nevertheless, one may wonder how well these myths reflect human archetypal structures. Although it is ultimately an empirical question (which Jung and others have addressed through their investigations), we may with some confidence say that *the true gods are the gods of Paleolithic hunter-gatherers*.

Based on the work of Fox (1989), Stevens (1993, p. 67) observes that we have spent 99.5% of our species' history as hunter-gatherers, and therefore it is the environment and life of the hunter-gatherer that has contributed most to our genetic heritage. What was it like? Our communities were "organic extended kinship groups" comprising "forty to fifty individuals, made up of approximately six to ten adult males, about twice that number of childbearing females, and about twenty juveniles and infants" (Stevens, 1993, p. 67). They were homogeneous in beliefs and practices and structured around families (not necessarily monogamous). Such communities frequently encountered each other, for marrying, warring, and other purposes.

This is our environment of evolutionary adaptedness. Therefore, the gods who ruled these people are the gods who rule us yet, like it or not.

Of course we no longer live as hunter-gatherers, and few would advocate that we return to that life. Nevertheless, the archetypes are real forces, and while they should not be obeyed blindly, neither can they be ignored without consequences. It is the function of ego-consciousness to find ways to live in the modern world without denying the gods of our hunter-gatherer ancestors.

However, we should beware of supposing that the ego can dominate or repress the archetypes; the ego is an organ of the Self, not vice versa. To act as though the ego is all-powerful is, in fact, to be "possessed" by the Hero archetype (an authentic archetype, to be sure, but just one of many). "That way madness lies": ego inflation, which calls forth Nemesis (the "justifiable anger of the gods") to punish the hubris of the hero who imagines that he is the master over the gods (Hillman, 1975a, pp. 178-80).

I have presented the archetypes in the context of "a polytheism which I do not on this occasion defend, for my only aim at present is to keep the testimony of religious experience clearly within its proper bounds" (James, 1985, p. 413). Nevertheless, the reader may be impatient about how it applies to monotheistic religions. Briefly, in archetypal psychology, the Self occupies a position comparable to the God of monotheistic religions (more on the Self below, III.F).<sup>7</sup> The individual archetypes are then aspects of God, or subsidiary spirits (e.g., angels and demons, but without the moral polarity). This, in fact, was one way the classical gods were interpreted by early Christian theologians (e.g., Seznec, 1981).

### ***C. The Special Role of the Animus/Anima***

Among the archetypes the Anima/Animus has a special position, for it is the nearest component of the unconscious; therefore it is the proximate representative of the divine other. Thus, this archetype can function as a *psychopomp* (soul guide) leading us to greater knowledge and communion with spiritual world.

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<sup>7</sup>See Javobi (1967, pp. 51–6) on the Self as the "God image" in the psyche.

The Anima of a man often acts as divine Muse, a source of creativity and access to feelings, because she is open to the nonrational and so provides an opening to the unconscious and soul. Thus the ancient poets invoke their Muses. “Sing, Goddess!” begins the *Iliad*; “Tell me, Muse, ...” the *Odyssey*; and Hesiod (*Works & Days*, 1–2) invokes,

Ye Muses of Pieria, who glorify  
through songs: come hither!

It is more than just a convention. Another well-known mythological example of the Anima is Athena, whom we see caring for Odysseus throughout the *Odyssey*.

Similarly, according to Jung, the Animus of a woman often acts as a source of rational purposefulness and intellect, and, as representative of the Logos principle, points the way toward the spirit. Many women have found the Animus to be a source of strength as they move into traditionally male vocations. Alternatively, the Animus may call a nun, for example, to become a “bride of Christ.”

However, if the Anima or Animus is not consciously integrated, it may possess the ego or be projected onto others in primitive ways. If it is projected, then a person may misperceive members of the opposite sex. For example, a man may perceive women as irrational children or seductive nymphs; a woman may perceive men as cold, aggressive, or remote. If possession occurs, then a person may act out the least differentiated characteristics of their contrasexual part. Thus, the animus-possessed woman may become inappropriately bossy, aggressive, judgmental, opinionated, or intolerant, while the anima-possessed man may become touchy, resentful, overly emotional, sentimental, or irrational (Jung, *CW* 9, pt. 2, ¶¶24–35).

Obviously, integration of the contrasexual part of the psyche does not mean losing one’s sexual identity. Rather, by establishing a conscious relation with this archetype, one achieves greater psychic balance, and recruits its powers, especially in establishing a connection to the other archetypes (gods). This is especially the task of the second half of life, when the Self urges the psyche to reclaim its rejected and neglected parts (Jacobi, 1967). From a theological perspective, the gods and spirits call one to make alliances with them and to put the ego in service to the higher Self.

As remarked in Section II.C, the Animus/Anima exists as both archetype (god) and as complex. The archetype is a high god (e.g., Athena for men, Dionysos for women), whereas the complex is a more personal spirit, more involved with one’s individual life. The complex thus acts in behalf of the archetype, serving as usual as mediator between the personal and the archetypal. (For more on the Animus/Anima, see E. Jung, 1957, and Jung, *CW* 9, pt. 2, ch. 3.)

#### ***D. Complexes and Mediating Spirits***

As discussed in Section II.B, the personal unconscious comprises complexes formed through the interaction of archetypes and our individual lives; in theological terms, we can say that each complex is the offspring of a god, assigned to an individual. The archetypes are the same for everyone, and in this sense they do not treat us as individuals. The complexes, however, are a hybrid of the general and the particular, the universal and the personal. We may even say that they “know” us, for the particulars of our individual histories are stored in the web of associations of which they are constituted. Therefore

complexes function as mediating spirits, intermediate between a person and a god. It may seem an exaggeration to identify psychological complexes with mediating spirits, but “complexes behave like independent beings” (Jung, *CW* 8, ¶253); they are autonomous personalities.

The ancient Greek word for such a mediating spirit was *daimôn*, which could refer to any divine spirit, but was especially applied to the mediators between humans and gods; it did not have the negative connotation of our word “demon” (Burkert, 1985, III.3.5). Many ancient cultures believed that each man had a *genius* (and each woman a *iuno*) that was born with them and stayed with them throughout their lives; this personal spirit has been explicitly identified with the unconscious mind (Onians, 1951, pp. 127–67). Some philosophers thought that each person had both an attending “good spirit” (*agathos daimôn*) and an interfering “bad spirit” (*kakos daimôn*), sometimes euphemistically called “the other *daimôn*.” This reflects the moral ambivalence of our complexes, which from the perspective of ego-consciousness may be good or bad. Like the archetypes (gods), the complexes (mediating spirits) have their own agendas, which may or may not agree with our egos’ goals.

Also like the archetypes, we may be “possessed” by a complex, or project it onto others (that is, from our perspective, one of our complexes may “possess” another person).

Projection of complexes is not strictly a matter of perception on the part of the projector, for the receiver may accept the projection and therefore also experience the possession. The two may therefore enter into a reality-altering state of mutual projection. For example, a person may accept the role of scapegoat projected onto them by a group.

Mutual projection also arises in families, since children are prone to accept projection from their parents. Unlived or rejected aspects of the parents may be projected onto the children, who become possessed and either reinforce or compensate their parents’ imbalances; such possessions can continue even after a parent’s death. Such is one cause of “family curses” (e.g., the House of Atreus), in which pathological complexes are passed on from generation to generation. 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).

Projection and possession (which are not necessarily bad) may be difficult to identify, because our complexes are closely bound to our personalities, and therefore hard to differentiate from ourselves. Indeed, it can become difficult to distinguish one’s authentic personality from the crowd of personal complexes.

One sign of “possession” is a defensive feeling when the complex is threatened. Therefore, a person may overreact emotionally when an intellectual position (such as a philosophical or political opinion) is criticized or even questioned. In general, complexes are created from strong emotional charges, and so sudden changes of mood or feeling (in the absence of obvious causes) may indicate that one has been possessed (or released from possession). Also, complexes often appear in dreams.

Projection may also be a cause of “soul loss,” since the psychic energy invested in a complex may be projected onto another person, and therefore be lost when that person is absent or has died; the *daimôn* has absconded with the projector’s soul. “Soul retrieval”

then requires that the projection be withdrawn — the *daimôn* found and brought back — and the psychic energy, which it had absorbed, be returned to the patient (Ingerman, 1991).

Since our “personal demons” affect our perception and behavior, it is important to be aware of them, even to befriend them. Because they are created by a god, they cannot, in general, be “banished” (dissolved), nor should we wish to do so, for they are channels of divine (archetypal) energy into our personal lives. On the other hand, we cannot allow ourselves to be ruled by them, for we have a conscious ethical standpoint, but they do not; like the gods, they are beyond good and evil.

Therefore, the first requirement is to come to know your “demons,” especially when they are possessing yourself or (via projection) someone else. Once known (and even named), they are less liable to possess or project. Next, one must enter into a dialogue with them, and reach some mutually agreeable alliance or, if that be impossible, reconciliation. Since they are spirits mediating between the gods and us, they can become invaluable allies in helping us to live in accord with divine providence, which is the goal of psychological individuation (see below on the Self, and App. B). Such interaction is the principal goal of the ancient Greek practice of *theurgy* (see Appendix E), but also of modern analytic procedures such as *active imagination* (Jung, 1997).

Again, possession and projection are not necessarily bad. To be the object of projection can be liberating and empowering; consider the effect of being the object of someone’s infatuation, or of being perceived as a great genius. The result can be beneficial, provided we bask in the glow only for a while, and avoid possession.

Furthermore, since a complex is a spirit mediating our relation to a god (archetype), it can be an enormous source of inspiration. It is no coincidence that the most creative people in all endeavors seem to be “possessed” by their callings. As Jung remarked, “The original meaning of ‘to have a vocation’ is ‘to be addressed by a voice’.” Hence,

Anyone with a vocation hears the voice of the inner man: he is *called*. That is why the legends say that he possesses a private daemon who counsels him and whose mandates he must obey. The best known example of this is Faust, and an historical instance is provided by the daemon of Socrates. (Jung, *CW* 17, ¶¶300–4)

For more on complexes see, for example, von Franz (1980).

### ***E. The Shadow: Collective and Personal***

Gods in polytheistic religions are not generally all-good or all-bad, therefore we do not find figures comparable to Satan in these religions. Rather, each of the gods has good and evil aspects, although even this puts the issue too much in our terms; the gods, as agents of divine providence, have their own purposes, which we may view from a human perspective as good or ill (for us). We are all too apt to assume that humans are at the center of the universe, and therefore that the perspective of human egos and our collective conscious values should be the universal norm. Nevertheless, we are humans, and there are spirits and perhaps even gods that are evil in human terms.

We may begin at the personal level: we have seen (Section II.C) that the Shadow, which resides in the personal unconscious, comprises all the traits and characteristics consciously rejected by the ego; in this sense it is “evil” (by definition). The Shadow is a complex, and therefore everything I have said above (III.D) about complexes applies to it; in particular, it may possess and project. These are especially insidious in the case of the Shadow: since it embodies everything that we reject, we are loath to admit it as our own; Prospero takes an enormous step toward psychic integration when he says of Caliban, “this thing of darkness I / acknowledge mine” (*Tempest* V.i.324–5).

One simple way to discover the nature of your own Shadow is to ask yourself what sort of person you find most despicable or impossible to endure; that is your Shadow image (Stevens, 1982, p. 215). Therefore, when we encounter a person who strikes us this way, we can be confident that we are projecting our Shadow onto them. (To be sure, such a person normally has something in common with our Shadow — that is the releaser that invites the projection — but it may be trivial compared to what we project onto them.) Worse, they may even accept our projection, and by becoming possessed by our Shadow, become our worst nightmare. However, if you are familiar with your Shadow complex, you may recognize its familiar features in the other person, and be able to withdraw the projection to both of your benefits.

Since the Shadow grows out of a person’s individual development, it incorporates consciously and unconsciously acquired values and beliefs about what is bad or wrong. Since much of this development takes place in the context of the family, much of the Shadow is likewise shared. Again, a collective Shadow complex common to a family (or larger group) may be experienced as a “family curse” (e.g., a tendency of abused children to become abusive parents, or a “curse” of substance dependency).

Further, the collective consciousness of a culture may generate a commonly shared Shadow, which then assumes the dimensions of “archetypal Evil.” This Shadow may possess or project, like any other complex, and is especially likely to be projected onto minorities or other disenfranchised groups. (Since the Shadow is consciously rejected by the group, it is by definition not “us”; therefore it must be “them.”)

Failure to recognize the essential amorality of the gods leads to their (apparently negative) aspects being relegated to Shadow figures, which leads us into a distorted relationship with divinity. “The brighter the light, the darker the shadow it casts”; thus all-good Gods must have all-evil Devils to balance them. Similarly, failure to recognize our personal Shadows leads to their projection onto others.

As with all complexes, knowledge of the Shadow diminishes its power. Recognizing that the gods have their own purposes and attempting to understand them aids us in establishing a relationship with them that neither denies their reality nor requires us to abandon our ethical standpoint. The mediating spirits help to establish this harmonious relation with divinity.

Aside from avoiding possession and projection, knowing your Shadow has other important benefits. Because it is the complement of collective and personal consciousness, it has many powerful characteristics and powers. If you are primarily a thinker, then your Shadow is dominated by feeling. Since your Shadow wants to bring a feeling orientation to life, by forming an alliance with the Shadow you can balance your conscious personal-



ity while satisfying its needs. In summary, integrating the traits of the Shadow into consciousness is a major stage in becoming psychologically whole.

Failure to assimilate our Shadows — individual and collective — is perhaps the biggest problem facing our world. (For more on the Shadow, see Jung, *CW* 9, pt. 2, ch. 2.)

### ***F. The Self and the One***

The archetypes, as psychical aspects of the instincts, all have their own purposes, but together — as the archetypal Self — they served the survival of our species in its environment of evolutionary adaptedness. So also, although the gods have their own agendas and purposes, together they are aspects of one archetypal system, which provides a universal foundation of significance and meaning for humankind. Therefore, many polytheistic religions have seen the gods as being under the direction of one chief god, or as constituting some kind of unified godhead, which is closely identified with the notion of divine providence. For convenience I will use Neoplatonic terminology and call this deity “the One.”

Before discussing the notion of providence, however, we must look more closely at the godhead. As discussed in Section II.C, behind the human archetypes, we find more fundamental archetypes shared by all primates; thence we proceed until we come to the archetypes of all living things, and ultimately to the archetypes of all physical systems. From the physical side, whatever the evolved perceptual-behavioral structures of humans or other animals, they must obey the laws of nature (including the laws of evolution), whatever they may be. From the psychical side, whatever the archetypal gods of humans may be, they are subject to more remote gods who govern all life, as these in turn are subject to that One that is the psychical aspect of the laws of nature. Jung called this physical-psychical unity the *Unus Mundus* (One World). From the physical perspective, the eternal laws of nature govern the process of the universe through all time; from the psychical perspective, the eternal One — through timeless divine providence — governs the activities of all souls, including those of gods, mediating spirits, and mortals. (Such “governance,” of course, need not imply determinism.)

Therefore we can see that the individual gods, with their various characters and purposes, are aspects of a One, which governs the entire universe. Thus, for example, Zeno of Citium said, “God, Mind, Destiny, Zeus — it is One Thing that is called by these and by many other names” (*SVF* I.102), which include “Providence” and “Nature,” according to Theodoretus (*SVF* I.176).

This divine One cannot but remind us of the God of monotheistic religions, but we must beware of transferring notions from the latter to the former. The One comprises the entire universe; it is all-inclusive and therefore paradoxical; as Heraclitus said, “God is day night, summer winter, war peace, glut hunger (all the opposites, that is the meaning)” (DK 22B67).<sup>8</sup>

Even more so than the individual gods, the One is beyond good and evil, for it includes all the gods and everything else. Heraclitus again: “To God all things are fair and

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<sup>8</sup>This conception of the One may remind the reader of the Dao, but that topic is outside the scope of this paper.

good and just, but humans hold some things unjust and some just” (DK 22B102). Certainly, many of the philosophers have told us that God is good, and that everything God does is good, but this “good” must be interpreted in the transvalued, super-human sense that it serves universal providence. We should not be so anthropocentric as to assume that this “good” will be to the benefit of the human species, let alone to the benefit of you or me.

Such a god and such providence may seem remote in the extreme. Nevertheless, the human archetypes — the gods of our hunter-gatherer ancestors — bring providence — and meaning and significance — into the human world and, both directly and through the agency of mediating spirits, into our individual lives. Therefore, by becoming conscious of these spirits and gods, and by striving to live, with their aid, in accord with providence, we can live meaningful lives through conscious, intentional participation in the destiny of the universe.

This is the lifelong process that Jung termed *individuation* (becoming *individuus* — undivided). That is, “Individuation is a conscious attempt to bring the universal programme of human existence to its fullest possible expression in the life of the individual” (Stevens, 1982, p. 142). (There are various practices, such as active imagination, for entering into dialogue with gods and mediating spirits; see Jung, 1997, or Johnson, 1986, for introductions; see also Appendices B, D, E.)

Within each of us is a Paleolithic hunter-gatherer; this is “the spiritual, inner and complete man” (*CW* 9, pt. 1, ¶ 529), the archetypal or primal human, sometimes called the *Archanthrôpos* or *Protanthrôpos*. But, although the archetypal human is a hunter-gatherer, we can neither blindly obey him (for we are not hunter-gatherers), nor can we blithely ignore him (for he is our essence). As in the other cases we have seen, our existential project is to reconcile modern life with the needs of this god. We become whole humans by consciously incarnating the god. (For more on the Self, see Jung, *CW* 9, pt. 2, ch. 4.)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Obviously this paper owes a great debt to Carl G. Jung, whose ideas are essential to its thesis. However, it also draws heavily on Anthony Stevens’ (1982, 1993, 2003) clear articulation of the interrelation of archetypal psychology, ethology, and neuroscience. Readers familiar with his work will be aware of the extent of my debt to him. For the most part, all I have done is to explicate the theological implications of archetypal psychology.

## APPENDIX A: THE NEURAL BASIS OF ARCHETYPAL THEOLOGY

Much work remains to be done on the neural mechanisms underlying human instinctual behavior, and therefore the archetypes and complexes. Nevertheless a few hypotheses may be mentioned.

For convenience we may use a *quadripartite brain model*, based on MacLean's (1990) *triune brain model*. First we have the oldest parts of the brain, the "reptilian brain," represented especially by the reticular activating system, which is crucial for maintaining alertness and consciousness and for basic instincts. Next is the paleomammalian brain, comprising the midbrain (especially the limbic system) and the paleocortex; it is concerned with appetites, emotions, and some of the less rigid aspects of the instincts. Upon these is built the neomammalian brain, represented by the neocortex. In humans its hemispheres are functionally differentiated, and so the third and fourth parts are the non-dominant hemisphere (normally the right), and the dominant (left) hemisphere.

Following Stevens (1982, pp. 247–75), it seems that most activity in the midbrain and lower regions is unconscious. Therefore it is likely that the archetypes have their neurological roots in the brain stem (and, below that, in physiological and physical processes, as already discussed). However, the archetypes also extend upward into the midbrain, and even into the cortical hemispheres, where they enter conscious experience. Although activity in the cortex is conscious, it has a different character in the two hemispheres, and so the dominant, verbal, "logical" left hemisphere may have trouble expressing the imagistic activity of the right hemisphere, which therefore seems mysterious and numinous (Stevens, 1982, p. 266). The personal unconscious and its complexes seem to reside in the lower cortical regions.

Individuation presupposes better integration of neural activity in all parts of the brain (see also App. B). The dominant left hemisphere has learned to inhibit information crossing the corpus callosum from the right hemisphere, and both hemispheres may inhibit inputs from the midbrain and brain stem. Various spiritual practices, such as prayer, meditation, and ritual can allow access to these deeper, more archetypal brain systems.

Further, the ventromedial cortex (subgenual cortex) controls communication between the prefrontal cortex and the limbic system, so it is an important mediator between consciousness and the unconscious. It seems to govern the integration of perceptions and thoughts into a meaningful whole; changes in its activity are correlated with mania and depression (Drevets & al., 1997). Therefore increased activity in this area may be important in religious experiences, such as states of mystical union. Understanding the neuropsychology of such experiences does not diminish their reality, for they do in fact reflect real contact with the transcendent One.

## APPENDIX B: EVOLUTIONARY NEUROPSYCHOLOGY OF INDIVIDUATION<sup>9</sup>

### *Individuation from an Evolutionary Perspective*

The goal of individuation is “becoming one’s own self” (Jung, *CW* 7, ¶266).

But the self comprises infinitely more than mere ego... It is as much one’s self, and all other selves, as the ego. Individuation does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world to one’s self. (Jung, *CW* 8, ¶432).

Or as Stevens (2003, p. 174) says, “Individuation is a conscious attempt to bring the universal program of human existence to its fullest possible expression in the life of the individual.” Thus the individuated person has consciously integrated the archetypes, and so his ego is in conscious relationship with the Self.

The Self is implicit in the human genome, and so the Self is the psychological aspect of universal humanity and it encompasses the destiny (the possibilities of future evolution) of our species within a particular eon of its evolutionary history. By conscious participation in this collective destiny we give transpersonal meaning to our lives.

But what is the nature of the Self, that is, of the archetypal human? Much has been revealed by means of the analytic techniques of Jungian psychology, which follow in the tradition of phenomenological exploration of the psyche in Neoplatonism and other ancient philosophies, Eastern as well as Western (see also App. D). However, the investigations of evolutionary psychologists provide additional valuable insights, as emphasized in the work of Anthony Stevens (1993, 1998, 2003; Stevens & Price, 2000). As previously discussed, for 99.5% of their existence, modern humans have lived as hunter-gatherers, and we still have, for the most part, a hunter-gatherer genome; the Primal Human is a paleolithic hunter-gatherer.

As Stevens (1993, p. 86) remarks, “Psychopathology results from the frustration of archetypal goals,” but the genetic adaptations of paleolithic hunter-gatherers are not necessarily good adaptations for contemporary people; therefore we have “the discontents of civilization.” How can the demands of the archetypes (our paleolithic gods) be satisfied in the context of modern life? This is one purpose of both Jungian analytic techniques (such as active imagination) and many spiritual practices, which facilitate negotiation between the conscious ego and the unconscious archetypes and complexes. Such dialogue must respect the archetypes and complexes as autonomous personalities (gods and daemons), as well as our conscious ethical commitments (Johnson, 1986, 189–95; Stevens, 2003, p. 276). Therefore these practices (which have analogs in ancient spiritual practices: Apps. D, E) are essential aids along the path of individuation.

### *Neuropsychology of Individuation*

The psychological effects of individuation are well documented in Jungian literature, but it will be worthwhile to consider the effects of individuation and ancient spiritual practices from a neurological perspective, for which we may use the quadripartite brain model. As discussed in Appendix A, Stevens (2003, ch. 13) suggests that the archetypes

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<sup>9</sup>This appendix is adapted from MacLennan (2006b).

have their roots in the midbrain and brain stem, because most activity in them is unconscious (Stevens, 2003, pp. 308–10). However, the neural systems subserving the archetypes also extend into the cortex, where they may influence conscious experience.

As is well known, in most people the left hemisphere is dominant and more specialized to verbal processing and discursive reasoning, whereas the right hemisphere is more specialized toward imagistic processes and intuition (these are very approximate descriptions, which indicate only the dimension of differentiation). Stevens (2003, p. 309) observes that the dominant left hemisphere may have difficulty interpreting the imagistic activity of the right hemisphere, which therefore seems mysterious and numinous. Also, the limbic system is likely involved in “feelings of conviction, of discovery, and of revelation” and in “the particularly Jungian experiences of numinosity and archetypal possession” (Stevens, 2003, p. 321). However, both hemispheres are capable of suppressing inputs from the limbic system (Stevens, 2003, p. 309).

The aim of Jungian psychotherapy is, in terms of the neurological model under discussion, to reduce the left hemisphere’s inhibition of the right hemisphere and to promote increased communication in both directions across the corpus callosum. (Stevens, 2003, p. 315)

This is accomplished by the *transcendent function*, which “resides in the mutual influence of conscious and unconscious, ego and Self” (Stevens, 2003, p. 315). Thus we can see how analytic techniques, such as active imagination, and ancient spiritual practices (Apps. D, E), facilitate such communication, leading to greater integration of brain function. These practices compensate for the (largely culturally induced) dominance of the left hemisphere and its suppression of information from the right hemisphere and lower brain systems (Stevens, 2003, pp. 315–16). The transcendent connection is accomplished by symbols, which bridge the conscious and unconscious, ego and archetype (Jung, *CW* 9 ii, ¶280) or, in Platonic terms, the worlds of becoming and being. (The same applies, of course, to shamanic healing; see Winkelman, 2000, ch. 5; see also App. D.)

In addition to the role of ventromedial cortex (App. A), I should mention the well-known studies of Newberg and d’Aquili (e.g., Newberg, d’Aquili & Rause, 2001; Newberg & Iversen, 2003), which indicate that meditative and mystical states are associated with simultaneous heightened activity in both the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems and with decreased activity in the posterior superior parietal lobe (PSPL). This brain region seems to be responsible, at least in part, for integrating a variety of information in order to define the body’s boundaries and to determine its position and orientation in space. It appears that meditative practices suppress neural inputs to the PSPL, so that it is unable to perform this function; as a result the subject may feel that his body is nonexistent, that he has merged with the universe, or that he is not in space at all (all experiences consistent with an “ascent to the One”; see Apps. D, E).

Sometimes these results are used to argue that mystical experiences are effectively illusory, merely a material effect of brain physiology. However there is an alternative interpretation. We know from many neurological studies that one’s body image (like the rest of the sensory world) is constructed by the brain (in interaction, of course, with the rest of the world), but this is an intellectual understanding that does little to change our ordinary experience. In contrast, by suppressing activity in the PSPL and other areas that construct

these images, these spiritual practices give the subject a direct experience of the constructed (or even illusory) nature of the everyday world. Further, thanks to the involvement of the limbic system, this experience is numinous and convincing.

## APPENDIX C: THE ARCHETYPES IN MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE<sup>10</sup>

The evolutionary Jungian perspective makes a positive contribution to the modern world-view and benefits from it in turn. On the one hand, contemporary evolutionary psychology can contribute to Jungian psychology. It expands our understanding of the archetypal ideas and the process of psychological integration by placing them in their evolutionary context and by providing an approach to investigating their neurological correlates; in this way Jungian psychology may be coordinated with contemporary biology and neuroscience without abandoning its valuable and essential phenomenological orientation (Stevens, 2003). Similarly, understanding the neurological correlates of archetypal structures supplements the dialectical and phenomenological investigations of historical Neoplatonism with new, empirical techniques and insights from other scientific disciplines, which will revitalize this spiritual tradition by resolving long standing problems and by suggesting new directions for its development (MacLennan, 2005).

Conversely, Jungian psychology and Neoplatonism complement the primarily behavioral orientation of contemporary evolutionary psychology by contributing a phenomenological perspective, which takes seriously peoples' subjective experiences; thus it does not negate spiritual experiences in its attempt to explain them. The one-sided, primarily mechanistic and materialistic, orientation of evolutionary psychology will be completed by the psychospiritual dimension necessary for a humane understanding of the human psyche that is both intellectually and emotionally satisfying (MacLennan, 2006a).

Thus, evolutionary Jungian psychology promises to unite our understanding of mind and matter in a theory transcending Cartesian dualism, which has perpetuated the intellectual and cultural hostility between science and spirituality. Perhaps it is not too optimistic to hope that this could help heal the widening rift between scientific and spiritual values in our culture.<sup>11</sup>

Balaguer (1998) analyzes the arguments for and against Platonic and anti-Platonic philosophies of mathematics, that is, of approaches to the ontological problem of the existence of mathematical objects. Of course, there are many variants of each of these philosophies, but Balaguer concludes that only one version of each is viable. On the Platonic side is *plenitudinous* or *full-bodied Platonism*, which is—roughly!—the idea that “all logically possible mathematical objects exist” (Balaguer, 1998, p. 5). Balaguer concludes that both full-bodied Platonism and so-called anti-Platonic *fictionalism* are defensible, in that there are no sound arguments against either of them. He draws the further conclusion that there is no “fact of the matter” as to which view is correct, and indeed that there is no such fact of the matter for any abstract objects. Certainly, the latter conclusion can be considered a weakness of Platonism—and of anti-Platonism too—but I believe that additional sources of evidence can be found in support of Platonism.

Jungian psychology provides a different perspective on mathematical objects from that which is typical in the philosophy of mathematics, for Jungian psychologists have established that certain numbers and shapes are psychologically potent independently of

<sup>10</sup>This appendix is extracted and adapted from MacLennan (2006a) and MacLennan (2007).

<sup>11</sup>So also Card (1996) argues for a Jungian *archetypal* philosophy of nature, in the tradition of nineteenth-century *Naturphilosophie*, which was inspired by Goethean science and further developed the Neoplatonic concept of the *anima mundi*.

any cultural or personal associations (Card, 1996; von Franz, 1974; Robertson, 1989, 1995, ch. 19). For example, the number two has, in addition to its familiar quantitative properties, a *qualitative aspect* encompassing psychological experiences of duality, opposition, complementarity, and so forth (Jung, *CW* 14).

What is the foundation of the universal qualities of numbers, shapes, and other mathematical objects? Many of these are universal because they are rooted in the neuropsychology common to all humans. In particular, I think it is likely that the qualitative character of the numbers, especially in their more dynamical aspects, can be found in the neurodynamics of the nervous system (von Franz, 1974, p. 7; Jung, *CW* 8, ¶420; MacLennan, 2006a). For example, neurodynamical processes underlie our experiences of clear differentiation, cognitive dissonance, and so forth, which are part of the qualitative experience of duality. So also experiences associated with unity, such as mental coherence and settling on a conclusion, are rooted in neurological processes. Indeed, Lakoff and Núñez (2000) have shown that many mathematical concepts, even in such abstract systems as set theory, are rooted in our embodied interactions with the physical world, for which our nervous systems have been adapted by evolution.

Therefore, a Neoplatonic or, more precisely, a Neopythagorean approach to the foundations of mathematics that is understood in the context of evolutionary Jungian psychology offers potential advantages over the usual philosophies of mathematics, for it will expose the neurophenomenological foundations of mathematical concepts in their psychological fullness, that is, their qualitative aspects as well as the quantitative (von Franz, 1974). From this perspective, mathematical objects, like the other archetypes, are both psychical and objective, for they reside in what Jung called the objective psyche, the network of psychological structures common to all humans (Stevens, 2003, p. 65).<sup>12</sup>

Von Franz (1974, p. 7) said, “The lowest collective level of our psyche is simply pure nature,” but we cannot simply equate the collective unconscious with the physical universe; this would be to dilute the term “archetype” to meaninglessness. We can solve the problem, I believe, by reconsidering the relation of the archetypes to the genome. The human genome defines the characteristics of human beings, but many of these characteristics have nothing to do with the archetypes. For example, the genes that define the basic structure of our tissues and organs, the biochemistry of our cells, etc., have nothing to do with archetypes (so far as we know). For a gene to affect an archetype (which is the psychical aspect of an instinct), that gene must influence a process that has a psychical aspect, that is, which can, at least potentially, affect our consciousness. Many physiological processes have no such aspect, so far as we can tell. On the other hand, any process that is common to all humans and has a psychical aspect will be archetypal; it will be a part of the objective psyche. Such archetypal processes remain in the collective unconscious until they manifest in conscious experience.

Certainly the numbers, or at least certain numbers, are archetypal. We find Unity, Duality, Trinity, Quaternity, and some others described in similar terms in Pythagorean philosophy, alchemy, Taoism, the Qabalah, Hinduism, and many other systems of thought. The archetypal numbers seem further removed from our life than the familiar archetypes (Mother, Father, Anima, Animus, etc.), for the familiar archetypes correspond to instincts

<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, Kepler attributes to Proclus (“his favorite author”) the idea that innate archetypes, especially of mathematics, are instincts (*instinctus*) (Pauli 1955, pp. 162, 165).



that govern human relations, and so they are often personified and behave as autonomous personalities (i.e., as gods). The numerical archetypes, in contrast, are experienced as impersonal forces. The greater remoteness and unfamiliarity of the archetypal numbers are why throughout history, even in polytheistic cultures that honored the archetypes as gods, the lore of the archetypal numbers has been confined to esoteric groups (Pythagoreans, Qabalists, alchemists, etc.).

Granting then the existence of numerical archetypes, we must ask what are the processes, common to all humans, that lead to these archetypal experiences. So far as I know, this question has not been investigated adequately to date, so I will offer a few ideas. I think that the archetypal numbers correspond to certain common physical processes in nature, which occur in the brain as well as elsewhere. When they occur in our brains, we experience them as archetypal situations; when we perceive them in the external world, we may project our archetypal understanding onto them.

Consider Duality, the quality of the archetypal number Two, which underlies psychological experiences of opposition, dichotomy, and clear differentiation (which will be experienced in some form by all animals, not just humans). One manifestation of this experience is the satisfied feeling of sure classification (we know what we are looking at, we know what to do about it, etc.). The comfort of this state explains why so many people avoid the uncertainties of complex situations and cling to fundamentalist ideologies of one kind or another (including scientific fundamentalism!). We also experience Duality in a less pleasant form when we are on the horns of a dilemma, forced to choose between alternatives that are equally attractive or unattractive. Ethologists call this a *state of conflict*, and being on the cusp between fight and flight is a familiar example, an archetypal experience common to all animals.

Archetypal Three can manifest in several ways. One is the state of mediation or balance between opposed poles, which is a relatively static experience. Another manifestation is more dynamic, and that is the feeling of a connection, proceeding from a beginning to an end, as when a state of conflict resolves into a course of action. Clear classification, the state of conflict, and the resolution of a conflict are all archetypal experiences that can be correlated with physical processes in the nervous system (e.g., a stable firing pattern, competition between two such patterns, and resolution of this competition).

Finally, the experience of Unity, which transcends the Duality of self and other, is of course fundamental to mystical experience. I anticipate that deeper investigations into the psychological aspects of fundamental physical processes will illuminate these archetypes, and conversely reveal the archetypal and psychological aspect of physical law.

Since contemporary science is essentially mathematical, such an enriched understanding of mathematics can help us to understand the unconscious cognitive-emotional structures that condition all of our scientific enterprises (Pauli, 1955, pp. 208–9). It may help us to understand criteria of symmetry, beauty, and elegance by which mathematical and scientific theories are judged, which contribute to their acceptance, and which motivate the search for confirming evidence (Curtin, 1982; Heisenberg, 1974). It may help explain the—essentially non-scientific—sources of scientific hypotheses and models, especially when they are mathematical in form. Thus, in a previously unpublished paper, Pauli argues for “a future description of nature that uniformly comprises physis and psyche,” and

that to achieve such “it appears to be essential to have *recourse* to the archetypal *background of scientific terms and concepts*” (Meier, 2001, p. 180). At a more fundamental level, this unified description may deepen our understanding of the psychological components of scientists’ preference for quantification, clear and distinct mathematical structures, definite standards of proof, abstraction and formalism, and other features of contemporary scientific practice that are familiar but not inevitable. Therefore Pauli (1955, p. 208) argues that henceforth the only acceptable scientific view will be “the one that recognizes *both* sides of reality—the quantitative and the qualitative, the physical and the psychical—as compatible with each other, and can embrace them simultaneously.”<sup>13</sup>

As modern science emerged in the seventeenth century, it incorporated a number of ideas from the Neoplatonic and Neopythagorean tradition, including the notion that there is a hidden structure of abstract, and especially mathematical, *Ideas* underlying reality and giving rise to visible phenomena. However, these notions were imported into a dualist framework in which an inanimate, or soulless, mechanical world is opposed to *man*—and I use the gendered term intentionally—as observer and exploiter. Over the past four hundred years, the self-reinforcing processes of science and society have widened this gap, and an increasingly remote and abstract relation to physical reality has led scientists, technologists, and consumers to withdraw from empathetic participation in living nature. Further, with the advance of materialist, quantitative science the human soul has, of course, been pushed further and further into the margins, alienating many people from science.

I think that some of these disharmonies among ourselves, and between humans and the rest of nature, may be eliminated by combining insights from Neoplatonism with evolutionary Jungian psychology to reveal the objective archetypal *Ideas*, which inform our relations to each other, to the natural world, and to the spiritual realm, but which also underlie our scientific concepts and our most abstract theories. In particular, by acknowledging the psychological and phenomenological reality of our experience of these archetypal *Ideas*, we transcend the Cartesian gap, not by reducing all phenomena to inert matter, but by recognizing the equally objective psychical and physical aspects of a unitary reality (MacLennan, 2008).

For these archetypal *Ideas* are not abstract, inert quantities, but qualities full of the richness of human experience, living and dynamic, brimming with symbolic meaning, emotional and spiritual as well as intellectual. From this perspective, even the most materialist of issues are understood to have an equally valid and objective spiritual aspect, accessible to empirical investigation, in the broad sense. Materialist values are not complete in themselves, but must be complemented by non-materialist, but nevertheless objective, values.

Certainly, the goal of such a renewal of science and technology is not to replace current approaches to science, but to expand the human relation to nature in ways that will enrich our understanding, and to lay a foundation for an environmentally sensitive technology.

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<sup>13</sup>See Card (1996) for the prospects for a future archetypal philosophy of nature and its application in several scientific disciplines.

## APPENDIX D: ANCIENT GREEK SPIRITUAL PRACTICES<sup>14</sup>

### *Ancient Greek “Shamanism”*

It is now well established that ancient Greek philosophy had roots in the shamanic practices common to many cultures (e.g., Dodds, 1951, ch. 5; Butterworth, 1966, ch. 4, 1970; Kingsley, 1994, 1995, ch. 15). The Greeks learned these techniques from the “Scythians” when they colonized the north shore of the Black Sea in the seventh century BCE and from the Thracians and Persian Magi, who also knew north-Asiatic shamanism (Hornblower & Spawforth, 1996, p. 1375; Kingsley, 1995, pp. 226–7). These practices are reflected in the stories of Orpheus, who exhibits many of the features of a “great shaman” (Dodds, 1951, p. 147; Eliade, 1964, pp. 391–2); of Aristeas (8th–6th cents. BCE), whose soul could leave his body in trance and accompany Apollo as his raven; of Abaris (7th–6th cents. BCE), the healer-sage (*iatromantis*) who traveled on a magic arrow (a typical shamanic wand), which he later gave to Pythagoras; and of the semi-historical Epimenides (7th–6th cents. BCE), who purified Athens (596 BCE) and was also known for leaving his body while in a trance state (Avery, 1962, s.vv.; Dodds, 1951, pp. 140–2; Hornblower & Spawforth, 1996, s.vv.). They all exemplify many of the characteristics of shamanic practice, as presented by Eliade (1964, especially ch. 11), and were closely associated with Hyperborean Apollo (reflecting, again, the northern connections). Evidence of shamanic practice is also apparent in ancient biographies of historical figures, such as the pre-Socratic philosophers Pythagoras (572–497 BCE), who descended into the underworld and claimed to have the soul of Hermotimus, an ancient shaman, and whose followers venerated the *Orphica* and sometimes wrote under the name “Orpheus” (Dodds, 1951, pp. 141, 143–5); Parmenides (fl. 495), whose poem, with its progress from the illusory world of duality to the One, has many of the hallmarks of a shamanic journey (Kingsley, 1999, 2003); Empedocles (c.495–435), a magical healer who boasted that he could control the weather and retrieve souls from Hades (Dodds, 1951, pp. 145–7; Kingsley, 1995); and other less well-known figures. They all combined “the still undifferentiated functions of magician and naturalist, poet and philosopher, preacher, healer, and public counselor” (Dodds, 1951, p. 146) and bore the distinguished title “healer-seer” (*iatromantis*), as a good term as any for a shaman.

Ryan (2002) shows in detail that Jung’s (1963, ch. 6) own path of individuation fits the pattern of shamanic initiation known from many cultures. This process may be divided into three stages: call, crisis, and cure (Ryan, 2002, ch. 6). The *call* from the depths may take the form of arresting dreams, visions, and compulsions; these are the results of the psyche’s intrinsic dynamic toward psychic integration. However, since the conscious mind is unprepared to integrate these awakened psychic forces, their effect is an inclination to introversion, including retirement from the everyday world, depression, listlessness, moroseness, introversion, and a tendency to meditate, sleep, and be absent minded. However, active repression, that is, ignoring or refusing the call, may result in psychosis or other illness.

<sup>14</sup>This appendix has been extracted and abridged from MacLennan (2006b).

The *crisis* results from the dissolution of the structures of the ordinary personality, which would impede the transformation, and from an influx of chaotic and disturbing spiritual material from the depths, which can result in madness if not properly managed (part of the shaman's training). As these psychic forces gain in strength, they take on archetypal and daemonic forms; if opposed, they attack the structure of ego consciousness, resulting in soul-loss or dissociation, but if respected and recruited, they can act as guides, for they are the psychodynamic processes, the *psychopompi* (soul guides), directed toward the end of psychic integration. As they lead deeper into the heart of living nature, they manifest theriomorphically, that is, as animal spirit guides (e.g., raven). Arrival at the creative center of the cosmos and of the psyche is signaled by the appearance of symbols of centrality, such as the cosmic axis, and symbols of completeness, such as circular figures with four-fold symmetries (see also App. C). There, the gem of eternal life, the *lapis philosophorum*, may be won. There, initiatory death and dissolution leads to the psychic reintegration and rebirth of the healer-sage.

Thus the *cure* results in a reintegration of the psyche, in which consciousness comes into communication and cooperation with the archetypal forces of the universe. The individual psyche takes its place as a blossom on the Tree of Life growing at the cosmic axis. Because shamans, like Jung, have experienced these psychodynamic forces for themselves, along with the resulting psychic integration, as *wounded healers* they are qualified to help others along the initiatory path toward psychic wholeness. As we will see, these shamanic practices, leading to *individuation* (psychic integration), were refined in the Greek philosophical schools, especially those culminating in Neoplatonism.

### ***Ancient Philosophy as a Way of Life***

It may seem that neither shamanic practices nor Jungian analytic techniques have much to do with Neoplatonic philosophy, but it is important to keep in mind that ancient *philosophia* ("love of wisdom") was a system of practices constituting a way of life (Hadot, 1995). This is most apparent in Pythagoreanism, the adherents of which included both monastic and lay practitioners. (Pythagoreanism is especially interesting because it is the lynch pin between shamanism on one side — Pythagoras is connected closely with Hyperborean Apollo — and classical Greek philosophy, especially Platonism, on the other.)

In general terms, ancient philosophy involved a teacher guiding students toward a better way of living, the philosophical way of life (*bios philosophikos*); toward this end, the primary goal was care (*therapeia*) for the soul. Much like modern therapy, this involved individual guidance and practice as well as group practices. The student might be assigned spiritual practices (*askêseis*) including meditation, contemplation, affirmations, visualization, and journal writing. Group activities included examination and encouragement of one another's spiritual progress. (More advanced practices, leading toward psychic integration, will be discussed later.)

Instruction in the doctrines (*dogmata*) of the philosophical school has to be interpreted in the context of the so-called "therapy of the word" (Lain Entralgo, 1970). That is, words (*logoi*) were administered to the student as a kind of "talking therapy," suited to his or her particular psychological problems or stage of spiritual progress, as judged by the teacher, much as a doctor would tailor a medicine to a sick person's condition (Hadot,

2002, ch. 9). These verbal therapies operated on many levels of the student's soul through their dialectical, rational, and emotional effects. Their manner of operation is connected with that of hymns, prayers, incantations, and spells. Therefore, we must interpret the surviving philosophical texts of the ancient schools in this context, because they were part of the panoply of means used to care for individual students' souls. Hence, the doctrine depends to some extent on the needs of individual students and their progress toward the philosophical life. As Epicurus said, "Empty are the words of that philosopher who cares for (*therapeutai*) no human suffering" (Porphyry, *Ad Marc.* 31).

Although they spoke with the vocabulary of ancient Greek religion and philosophy, it will become apparent that the Neoplatonic philosophers were describing the same psychological phenomena later investigated by Jung, and that they had similar techniques for psychological integration. This is, of course, no coincidence, for there is a direct line of intellectual descent from Plato to Jung. Jung's interests in Gnosticism and alchemy are well known, but shortly before his break with Freud he became engrossed in Friedrich Creuzer's *Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völke* and its Neoplatonic interpretation of mythology (Jung, 1963, p. 162). (Creuzer became well known for his editions of the works of Plotinus, Proclus, and Olympiodorus.) Hillman (1975b, p. 149) argues that Jung's enthusiasm resulted from the Neoplatonic archetypal outlook that he shared with Creuzer. Conversely, Hillman (1975a, ch. 4; 1975b) observes that the great Renaissance Neoplatonist Marsilio Ficino "was writing, not philosophy as has always been supposed, but an archetypal psychology" (Hillman, 1975a, p. 202). Jung (*CW* 8, ¶154) makes the connection explicit when he defines the archetypes as

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

He cites as precedents the use of the term *archetypos* by Plotinus, Philo Judaeus, Irenaeus, pseudo-Dionysius, and the *Corpus Hermeticum* (Jung, *CW* 9 i, ¶5). Thus there are deep connections between analytic psychology and Neoplatonism. This is reinforced, not contradicted, by Jung's use of Gnostic and alchemical insights, for the latter share with Neoplatonism a common worldview arising out of Middle Platonism.

Furthermore, although Jung was influenced by Neoplatonic philosophy and its relatives, there are deeper reasons for these similarities, for the Neoplatonists, like Jung, engaged in a systematic phenomenological investigation of the depths of the psyche, which they integrated into a non-dualistic conception of reality (Jung's *Unus Mundus*). The structure of the psyche, including the collective unconscious, was the same then as it is now, so they arrived at a common understanding and practice (as, indeed, have the explorers of the psyche in many cultures). This will be clear when we have discussed the Neoplatonic way of life.

### ***The Structure of Reality***

In order to explain the basis of the Neoplatonic way of life, it is necessary to understand the Neoplatonists' conception of reality. To this end, I will review the three hy-

postases, as presented by Plotinus.<sup>15</sup> (Among the many excellent introductions to Plotinus' philosophy, I will mention only Hadot, 1993.)

At the top of the hierarchy of reality is the Inexpressible One (*to arrhêton hen*), which unites and transcends all the opposites (being/nonbeing, unity/plurality, stability/change, eternity/time, male/female, etc.). It is the *formal cause*, which implies the existence and being of the rest of reality, and the *final cause* toward which everything inevitably returns. It is equivalent to the *Unus Mundus*, the physical-psychical unity that Jung (*CW* 14, ¶659) described as “the original, non-differentiated unity of the world or of Being.” Although the One stands above and comprehends all of reality, the *macrocosm*, it has a similarly comprehensive image in the *microcosm* of each individual soul (sometimes called “the flower of our whole soul,” *anthos pasês tês psychês*). Therefore we can see that the One has much in common with the Jungian Self.

Below the One is the universal Mind or *Nous*, which contains the living, eternal archetypal Ideas; similarly, in the microcosm of our individual minds, the archetypal Ideas reside in one's own *nous* (intuitive mind), which is particular to each person, but collective in structure. More precisely, the universal *Nous* corresponds to that part of the collective unconscious in which the archetypes are more articulated than in the Self. The correspondence becomes more obvious when one realizes that in both Neoplatonic philosophy and Jungian psychology many of the archetypal Ideas are personified and correspond to the gods of the polytheistic religions. At the higher (or more interior) level of the Mind, these Ideas exist in a continuum and interpenetrate one another, but at the lower levels they are more distinct. (As an analogy we may take the colors hidden in white light, which are separated by a prism.) Nevertheless, like Jungian archetypes, the Ideas are not perceived directly, but only through their effects in time and space in our individual lives. Also, it is important to understand that *nous* does not refer to the rational faculty, which resides at a lower level in both the macrocosm and microcosm, but to the intuitive mind, which directly grasps the archetypal Ideas.

In both the macrocosm and the microcosm, the soul proper (*psychê*) is the mediator between the non-spatial eternal Ideas and the spatiotemporal material world. The macrocosmic World Soul conveys the Ideas into the World Body (material universe), and by means of them the physical world is ordered as it evolves in space and time. Similarly, in the microcosm of an individual person, the soul proper mediates the activation of the archetypal Ideas in that individual's life. So also, the soul governs thought that proceeds sequentially in time, such as deliberative reasoning (*dianoia*).

According to Neoplatonic philosophy, the eternal archetypal Ideas, which include the gods, are ordered into hierarchies. Below these eternal Ideas, but between them and the ever-changing physical world, are mediating spirits, which Neoplatonists call daemons (*daimones*), each of whom is in the lineage (*seira*) of some god. Since the gods, who reside in the realm of being, are impassive, that is, because they do not respond directly to

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<sup>15</sup> In discussing the Neoplatonism I am referring primarily to the works of Plotinus (205–269/70 CE), Iamblichus (245–c.325 CE), and Proclus (410 or 412–485 CE), which survive in relative abundance. There are certainly differences among their philosophies, but for our purposes they may be left to specialists. They constitute a reasonably coherent body of doctrine that we may call “Neoplatonic.” A clear, concise introduction to Neoplatonic philosophy from a contemporary perspective can be found in Addey (2000, ch. 1).

events in the physical world, it is the daemons who are responsible for manifesting the providence and will of the gods in the realm of becoming. Furthermore, each person has several *personal daemons* (*oikeioi daimones*) associated with him, such as a “good daemon” (*agathos daimôn*), who guides him; indeed one’s ego can be considered a kind of daemon. Therefore, daemons may be deeply involved in the lives of individuals, both affecting and affected by them. Similarly, Jung has shown how complexes may grow, by means of association, around an archetypal core as a result of the activation of that archetype in the course of an individual’s life.<sup>16</sup>

As we know from Jungian psychology, when an archetype or complex is activated in a person, it influences his perception and behavior in accord with its dynamical structure. Quite literally the person may be *possessed* by the archetype or complex (e.g., von Franz, 1980). Further, other persons, animals, or even objects may be incorporated into the archetypal relationship and have a role *projected* upon them, which causes them to be perceived as being charged with significance and even numinous. Similarly in Neoplatonism a person may be possessed by a god (archetypal Idea) or a daemon, which may seize his consciousness, altering his perception and influencing his behavior. The ancient Greeks described this state of inspiration as being seized (*katalêpsis*) or held down (*katakthê*) by the divinity.

### ***Stages in the Neoplatonic Way of Life***

To explain the ancient Neoplatonic path to individuation, I will present its most developed form as found in the writings of Proclus (e.g., Rosán, 1949, pp. 205–13; Siorvanes, 1996, pp. 189–99). The process is in three phases, which are correlated with the “Chaldean Virtues” (or “Excellences,” *aretai*): Love (*erôs*), Truth (*alêtheia*), and Trust (*pistis*), which in turn correspond to three attributes of the One: its Beauty (*kallos*), Wisdom (*sophia*), and Goodness (*agathotês*). Both triads correspond to the three parts of the soul, the faculties of desire (or appetitive part, *epithumêtikon*), reason (or rational part, *logistokon*), and will (or spirited part, *thumoeidês*), respectively, as described by Plato (*Rep.* IV, 435e–444e). Each is important in the Neoplatonic way of life.

The basic idea is that this path is a return to the first principle (the One). Therefore, as the One processes outward, through the universal Mind (*Nous*) and the World Soul into the material world, so also the philosopher must ascend from the material world, through the World Soul and universal *Nous*, and beyond them in order to reunite with the One. This is accomplished by turning inward, first toward his individual soul (*psychê*), then to his *nous*, and finally to the One within himself, for the microcosm is an image of the macrocosm. “For every thing when it enters into the unspeakable depths [*arrhêton eisduomenon*] of its own nature will find there the symbol of the Universal Father [*to symbolon tou pantôn patros*]” (Proclus, *Plat. Theol.*, p. 104).

The guiding principle is “like knows like,” and therefore the philosopher must first become more like the soul, then more like the *nous*, and finally more like the One. Since the One is the principle of unity, by this process the philosopher becomes whole and indivisible (*individuus*), that is, individuated.

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<sup>16</sup> Additional information about Neoplatonic theology and daemonology can be found in Wallis (1972). See MacLennan (2003, 2006a) for additional discussion of specific complexes and daemons.

1. *Love (Erôs) — the Erotic Ascent and the Turn to the Soul*

In the first stage, governed by Eros, the philosopher turns his attention away from the body and external world and inward toward the soul. In particular, he submits to the power of Returning Love (*Erôs Epistreptikos*), which calls his soul back to its source. Proclus enumerates the steps: (1) the philosopher turns away from the ordinary active life of the citizen, (2) he abandons the company of ordinary people and associates only with other philosophers, and (3) he detaches himself from material goods and comforts; finally, (4) he must extinguish (but not repress) his desire (*orexis*) for internal satisfactions as well (Proclus, *Comm. Alc.*, coll. 517–8, *Chal. Phil.*, fr. 3; Rosán, 1949, pp. 205–9). Therefore the goal of this phase is a purification and sublimation of *desire (erôs)*. As a consequence, the philosopher begins to live the Erotic Life (*erôtikos bios*), in which his soul rejoices in its own goodness (*agathotês*), beauty (*kallos*), and justice (*dikaiousunê*).

This first stage may be compared to the *erotic ascent* described in Plato's *Symposium* (209E–212C), in which the desire for beauty is elevated from the body, to the soul, and finally to the mind. Correspondingly, the philosopher's desire for immortality is turned from physical union (in the realm of physical becoming), toward soul-union (in the realm of psychical becoming), and finally toward union with the Ideas (in the realm of psychical being). By means of this erotic ascent, the initiate is called to a greater focus on the spiritual realm. Psychologically, this is a process of introversion, which is often the first step toward shamanic initiation, which was also recapitulated in Jung's personal process of individuation.

2. *Truth (Alêtheia) — the Contemplative Ascent and the Turn to the Mind*

As the first stage, the erotic ascent, purified *desire*, so the second stage, the contemplative ascent, purifies *thought*, and thereby ascends to the level of Nous. As the first stage proceeded by the power of Eros and was directed toward the Beauty of the One, so the second proceeds by the power of Truth (*alêtheia*) and is directed toward the Wisdom (*sophia*) of the One; the goal is the Philosophical Life (*philosophikos bios*). We may distinguish in Proclus' philosophy seven kinds of things that can be known and the corresponding kinds of knowledge: sensation, imagination, opinion, reasoning, dialectic, intuition, and mystical union (Rosán, 1949, p. 64), and the contemplative ascent deals in succession with the first six of these (Rosán, 1949, pp. 209–13); the seventh is the goal of the theurgic ascent. (Plotinus' ascent is contemplative, because he recognizes nothing between the One and the Nous, so the power of Truth is sufficient to ascend to the One.)

The contemplative ascent begins with a three-stage withdrawal from contradictory impressions and judgments deriving from the world of becoming. First, the philosopher flees the sensations (*aisthêseis*), which are bound to the body and confuse the mind; then he eliminates imaginations (*phantasiai*), which are divided and have forms derived from sensation; finally, he ceases thinking in terms of judgments (*doxai*), which cloud the intuitive knowing of *nous* with contradictory ideas (Proclus, *Comm. Alc.*, col. 518, *Comm. Parm.*, col. 1025). Psychologically, the goal here is to still mental activity: the philosopher's attention is withdrawn from sensation, he ceases from wandering in his imagination, and he quiets the inner dialog of judgment.

These three stages of withdrawal of the mind from the world are followed by three stages of ascent, which successively refine the mind's power; the philosopher turns his



mind away from knowledge of transient things and toward knowledge of the eternal. The first stage refines the reasoning power (*dianoia*) by means of the study of mathematics: first geometry, which still makes use of form, but then arithmetic, which is more abstracted from the material world. In this way the mind is trained to turn inward toward contemplation of the inner world of forms and ideas (Proclus, *Comm. Parm.*, col. 1025). (Even in our modern world, mathematics provides a compelling entrée to Platonism; see Balaguer, 1998; see also App. C.)

The next stage of ascent is enabled by dialectic (*dialektikê*), which awakens the *nous*, purifies it, and opens it to the Truth, comprehended as a unity, not as separate branches of knowledge (Proclus, *Comm. Alc.*, col. 518, *Comm. Parm.*, coll. 653–4). Dialectic is not idle argument, but proceeds by a systematic exploration of the archetypal Ideas. If the philosopher has adequate knowledge, an affinity for true Being (*to ontôs on*), and sufficient eagerness (*prothumos*) and striving (*tasis*), then the dialectic art will prepare him for an intuitive vision (*theôria*) of the eternal archetypal Ideas (Proclus, *Comm. Parm.*, coll. 926–7). In more psychological terms, we may say that through dialectical exercises the philosopher can achieve an intellectual understanding of the realm of the archetypal Ideas, but that it still falls short of the direct experience of them (the object of the following stages).

Having advanced upward by means of reason and dialectic, the last step in the ascent toward Truth is accomplished by means of *intuition* (*noêsis*). This step, with its vision of the archetypal Ideas, will bring the philosopher to the threshold of contact with the gods (Rosán, 1949, 211–2). By this vision of the archetypal Ideas, which reside in the collective unconscious, the philosopher's *nous* makes intuitive contact with the universal Nous (the unparticipated Nous, *nous amethektos*, in Proclus' terms). That is, the images of the archetypal Ideas in the individual, participated *nous* form the symbolic bridge linking it to the universal Nous.<sup>17</sup>

According to Proclus' cosmology, there are six levels below the One: Being (*On*), Life (*Zôê*), World Mind (*Nous*), World Soul (*Psychê*), Nature (*Physis*), and Body (*Sôma*); the second three are a material and spatiotemporal reflections of the first three, which are atemporal and progressively more universal in order of ascent: Nous, Life, Being; and therefore more comprehensive in their temporal and material extensions, as reflected in Psychê, Nature, and Body, respectively. Body represents the stability and identity of anything that has Being; Nature represents those things that can act and are governed by natural laws, i.e., that have Life (i.e., living and animate beings); and Psychê is the actualization in time and space of the eternal archetypal Ideas in Nous (and therefore is restricted to sentient beings). Complementing the One at the bottom of the hierarchy is undifferentiated Prime Matter (*Hylê*). The extremes (One, Matter) are alike in being utterly simple; the greatest complexity is found in the middle, in sentient beings having both *nous* and *psychê*, such as humans, who have the freedom of will to choose the life of the philosopher. See Proclus (*Plat. Theol.* III), Siovanes (1996, pp. 123–6, 185–6).

To recap, the philosopher has ascended to the universal Nous, which is the lowest of the triad of levels that lie between the One and the World Soul: Being, Life, and Nous.

<sup>17</sup> An alternative means of ascent is to go yet deeper into the individual, participated soul — to *participated Being*, for example — and from that place to make contact with unparticipated Being, its universal progenitor; see Rosán (1949, p.211, n. 132).

Therefore the philosopher must use his intuition to ascend through each of these levels in order. First he reaches the level of *Nous*, which is identified with Kronos, ruler of the Golden Age, and he begins to live the Kronian Life (*kronios bios*), in which the soul has returned to its original simplicity and reposes in contemplation of the Ideas. Then, by the power of Truth he continues his ascent to Life and Being; psychologically, he penetrates into the “psychoid depths” of the collective unconscious, corresponding to the processes of life and the inanimate world (Jung, *CW* 8, ¶840, *CW* 9 i, ¶291). But that is as far as Truth can take him, for Being is the cause of Truth Itself (*autoalêtheia*), and so ascent above the level of Being requires a higher power than Truth. Thus philosophy must yield to theurgy.

### 3. *Trust (Pistis) — the Theurgic Ascent and the Turn to the One*

According to Proclus’ theology, the gods are unities (*henades*), which are images of the One; together with the One, they are above Being and therefore beyond the reach of even the intuitive mind (*nous*). In psychological terms, the archetypes, and the Self, which comprises them, cannot be grasped by the conscious mind; they are transcendent (Jung, *CW* 8, ¶417). (Therefore, from the Proclan perspective, the Plotinian contemplative ascent cannot rise all the way to the One, but only to its image in Being.) Nevertheless, although the divine archetypes and the Inexpressible One cannot be made objects of thought, the individual soul can approach them, make contact, and achieve unity in them.

However, since this ascent rises above the realm of Being, it cannot be accomplished by any conscious cognitive process, not even by intuition, for this is the realm of the Silence (*sigê*) that is prior to articulated thought (*logos*) and that is superior to judgment (*krisis*) and intuition (*noêsis*) (Proclus, *Chald. Phil.*, fr. 4, *Plat. Theol.*, 4.31). Therefore Proclus tells us that it must be accomplished by the power of *Pistis* (Trust, Faith), the third Chaldean virtue, which he defines as “contact (*sunaphê*) and union (*henôsis*) with the One” (Proclus, *Plat. Theol.*, 1.112–113). This is a kind of unfounded belief, but that is unavoidable, for rational belief is based on knowledge of causes, but the One has no cause other than itself, for it is the first cause. Therefore, contact with the One must be akin to the direct experience of sensation, for sensation is similarly incapable of grasping causes (Rosán, 1949, pp. 198, 215).

Therefore the last stage of the spiritual progress to individuation is accomplished by means of the spiritual practices of *theurgy*, by means of which the philosopher comes to know the gods through union with the gods, and thereby may live the life of the gods; “by this means we become god-inspired (*entheos*); fleeing all plurality and reverencing our own unity, we become one and act as a unity” (Proclus, *Comm. Alc.*, col. 519). This is individuation. (See Appendix E, which follows, on theurgy.)

## APPENDIX E: THEURGY

### *Definition of Theurgy*

Theurgy (*theourgia*) is commonly explained as “divine works” (*theia erga*) to contrast it to theology (*theologia*), or “divine words” (*theioi logoi*), because theurgy involves both ritual actions by practitioners to contact the gods, and the resulting manifestation of the gods in the theurgists’ lives (Lewy, 1978, exc. IV; Shaw, 1995, pp. 4–5). Hence it is also called the “priestly art” (*hieratikê technê*). The term itself and its cognates (*theourgōs*, *theourgikê*) are relatively late, first appearing in the writings of “Julian the Chaldean” and his son “Julian the Theurgist” (late second century CE), but it will become apparent that the practices have their roots in shamanism (see also App. D and Kingsley, 1995). Indeed, Neoplatonic theurgists claimed that the roots of their art were in the ancient traditions reflected in the *Chaldean Oracles* and Orphic poems.<sup>18</sup>

Apparently there were two degrees of theurgy, lower theurgy (or theurgy proper) and higher theurgy (Rosán, 1949, pp. 213–14; Sheppard, 1982; Majercik, 1989, pp. 35–6, 39–45). As we follow the path of ascent, we will begin with the lower theurgy and the principles upon which it is based.

### *The Premises of Theurgy*

As previously mentioned, each eternal, archetypal Idea (god) is the origin of a *seira* (lineage, line, chord, chain), which contains all the ideas, forms, and objects that participate in that Idea. Since they are manifestations or images of the archetypal Ideas, Neoplatonists call them *sumbola* and *sunthêmata*, which may be translated “tokens, signs, and symbols.” Originally these terms referred to tokens of recognition, such as the matching halves of a broken potshard, or a seal ring and its impression, used to confirm identity, contractual relationship, or *trust* between parties who might be unknown to one another. Thus they are a way of making the unknown known. Similarly, according to Jung, a symbol bridges the known and unknown, by linking a conscious image and an archetype forever hidden in the collective unconscious (which he called the *transcendent function* of consciousness). Our goal then is to understand how symbols can be used as a way to contact the collective unconscious, the realm of the archetypal Ideas, the divine realm.

Some symbols, of course, are universal; that is, they are part of the structure of an archetype in the collective unconscious. These symbols may contribute to activation of the archetype, or manifest themselves (in dreams, for example) when the archetype is active; such symbols may be called *essential*, that is, part of the *essence* of the archetypal Idea. Other symbols are not universal, but are restricted to an individual or to a culture or other particular group; these symbols have a *contingent*, learned connection to an archetypal Idea. Such symbols are mediated by a complex, which is a learned network of associations between images and behavioral dispositions, all surrounding an archetypal core. The contingent symbols belonging to a cultural context are sometimes revealed in

<sup>18</sup> Iamblichus *On the Mysteries (De mysteriis)* provides much of the Neoplatonic theoretical background for the theurgic art. Illuminating discussions of theurgy may be found in Rosán (1949, pp. 204–17), Dodds (1951, pp. 291–9), Lewy (1978, chh. III, IV), Majercik (1989, pp. 21–46), Shaw (1995, pt. III), Siorvanes (1996, pp. 189–99), and Clarke (2001). Addey (2003, ch. 6) presents theurgy in a modern context.

that culture's mythology, but one might have to use dream analysis and other analytic techniques to discover the symbols belonging to a personal complex.

These observations explain the importance of symbols in theurgy. Since each essential symbol participates in an archetypal Idea, it is in the "lineage" (*seira*) emanating from that god. We may think of it as a token, given to humankind, by which the god may be requested to manifest in an individual's life. Of course, as theurgists stress, no symbol or token can compel the manifestation of a god (for, according to Neoplatonic philosophy, the gods are impassive and already omnipresent); but the symbol can make the theurgist's soul more receptive to the energy of that god (like tuning a radio to a particular station). That is, although the archetypal Idea itself is impassive and exists outside of time and space, its image in the soul of the theurgist may be energized in time and space by the appropriate symbols.

An analogy may make this clearer. The gods (archetypal Ideas), which exist as an undifferentiated unity in the One (i.e., the Jungian Self), are analogous to the colors hidden in white sunlight. Now, opening the window shades does not compel the sunlight to enter, nor does a golden object cause yellow light to appear. But if the sun is shining, and we open the shades, and look at a golden object, we will see yellow light, the yellow light that was already present in the sunlight, but which we were unable to perceive without the open shades and the golden object. So also, experiencing the manifestation of a god is more likely if a person is open to the One and if they use appropriate symbols to attune their psyche to that god (archetypal Idea).

Each *contingent* symbol belongs to a daemon (complex); therefore use of that symbol may cause the daemon to manifest (i.e., cause activation of the complex), and, conversely, the daemon's activity may be signaled by corresponding symbolic images appearing in consciousness, dreams, etc. In this way one may learn the symbols belonging to a daemon. While the symbols associated with gods (archetypal Ideas) are universal, the symbols associated with a complex may be culturally relative or even peculiar to an individual person. Indeed, through repeated association, quite arbitrary signs and symbols may be used to contact a personal daemon (activate a complex); in effect, the daemon accepts the token as a means of invocation.

In fact, theurgy tends to deal more often with personal daemons (complexes) than with gods (archetypal Ideas), since all daemons are time-bound, and the personal daemons (complexes) incorporate material from that person's life and experience; they "know" people as individuals. Therefore, as the Neoplatonists state, daemons serve as intermediaries between the impassive, eternal gods and individual human souls, which exist in space and time. Nevertheless, because each daemon is in the lineage of a god (i.e., each complex has an archetypal core), the daemon provides indirect contact with the god. Further, by means of the signs and tokens belonging to a daemon, the theurgist may approach and make contact with the daemon's divine progenitor; that is, the theurgist may experience contact with an archetype of the collective unconscious.

Since many aspects of reality can participate in the same archetypal Idea, symbols can come in many different forms. For example, among the symbols of the god Helios, ancient theurgists list golden objects, the cock (which heralds the arrival of the sun), and heliotrope flowers (which turn toward the sun). Other symbols of the sun include the disk,

eye, wheel, chariot, eagle, phoenix, white or golden horses, and rays (Stevens, 1998, p. 136). In addition to these images, theurgists use materials in the *seira* of the god; for example, Helios governs hot spices, such as cinnamon, the metal gold, the stone citrine, ginger, bay leaves, saffron, and many other materials (Agrippa, 1651/1993, I.xxiii). Non-material symbols include hymns, chants, invocations, and music associated with the god; these might be performed out loud or in the imagination (for it is the mind that must be attuned to the god). Intermediate between material and non-material, we may place abstract forms (*kharaktêres*), such as geometrical figures and gestures, which might be drawn, engraved, or enacted, either in space or in the imagination.

Figurines might be assembled from various materials and forms in the god's lineage, their common symbolic significance unifying to converge on the intended divinity (Proclus, *De Sacr. & Mag.*, 150). Such a figurine might be burned, further symbolizing the unification of the tokens and their ascent to spirit (*spiritus*). This symbolic unification helps to lead the soul towards its own unification (Rosán, 1949, p. 213–14).

In the following sections I will describe the principal theurgic practices and show how they contribute to the process of psychic integration.

### ***Dream Incubation***

*Dream incubation (engkoimêsis)* was an important means of access to the divine realms in the ancient world, especially among the Pythagoreans and their philosophical descendants (Dodds, 1951, ch. 4; Kingsley, 1995, pp. 284–8, 1999, pp. 77–86); it is also, of course, a common shamanic practice (Eliade, 1964, ch. II, pp. 101–9) and a fundamental technique in modern analytic psychology (Jung, 1974; Meier, 1967). Through their symbolism, dreams reveal gods and daemons (archetypes and complexes) who must be confronted and integrated in order to achieve individuation.

The basic procedure, especially as practiced in the Asclepeia, was as follows (Meier, 1967, pp. 53–69). First the supplicant purified himself, generally with a ritual bath; this prepared him for his encounter with the divine. Indeed, incubation is a kind of initiation (as is a shaman's initiatory dream), and so the supplicant must be properly prepared and acceptable to the god. Next there were preliminary sacrifices, with accompanying auspices and auguries, to determine when the god (Asclepius) was willing to give the supplicant a healing dream; in some cases this might take months. In psychological terms, symbols are used to constellate an archetype, which then, through its symbolic manifestations, reveals the immanence of a "big" (i.e., archetypal) dream. When the auspices were favorable, the supplicant entered the inmost sanctuary (*abaton*, *aduton*) at night time (as typical of the mysteries) and reclined on a couch near the divine image (*agalma*) of the god. Interestingly, a supplicant might have another person (e.g., a slave or priest) enter the *abaton* and dream for him; such vicarious dreaming occurs sometimes in modern psychoanalysis (Meier, 1967, p. 55).

During the night, the god (possibly in animal form) might appear in a dream (*onar*) or in a waking vision (*hupar*). The firm intention to awake in the dream world might induce a *lucid dream* (LaBerge & Rheingold, 1990, ch.3), and, as in Jungian active imagination, the supplicant might enter into discussion with the god, perhaps negotiating about the treatment. For example, if a Pythagorean objected to being told to eat meat, the god might change the prescription. Alternately, the god might have intended the prescription as a

paradox (*paradoxon*), that is, the breaking of a taboo or another forbidden act; this *enantiodromia* (turning backward) could effect a *coniunctio oppositorum* to heal the soul and thereby lead to greater psychical balance and integration. Often, especially if the god himself appeared, the dream was healing in itself, and we know from Jung that archetypal symbols can facilitate psychic healing and individuation. Other dreams prescribed surgical procedures, but these were generally interpreting symbolically rather than literally (like the dismembering and reconstitution experienced by shamans during their initiations). In some cases the priests of Asclepius, who were called *therapeutai* (medical attendant-priests), assisted in dream interpretation. As in modern analysis, the ancient patient was expected to record his dream in complete detail, and successful healing dreams were recorded on votive tablets that were displayed for all to see (as modern dreams may be published in the analytic literature). Finally, the supplicant made thank-offerings (*iatra, sôstra*), which often took the form of paeans or other artistic productions, which may be compared with the ritual actions or physical performances which should complete dream analysis or active imagination (Johnson, 1986, pp. 97–134, 196–9).

### ***Consecration — Telestikê***

One of the best-known theurgic practices is *telestikê*, a ritual of consecration, in which a divine image (*agalma*) is completed by being given a soul (*empsychôsis*). The divine image is itself, of course, a symbol of the god, but it is augmented with other tokens and symbols, which might be placed in, on, or around the image. These might be accompanied by symbolic sacrifices (e.g., a cock for Helios), fumigations, and hymns or other performances. Psychologically, these all contribute to the activation of the archetypal Idea, and a consequent projection onto the divine image, which has been made a suitable receiver (*epitêdeia dokhê*) for the projection. Therefore, the image becomes numinous, radiant with the divine energy (*energeia*). Thus the image may function as a focus for contact with the god, allowing the theurgist to make inquiries, petitions, vows, pacts, etc. (As already mentioned, contact with a daemon is more likely and more useful than contact with an archetypal god, but the principles are the same.) Except for its greater dependence on a physical image, this process is quite similar to Jungian *active imagination*, in which a personified archetype or complex is engaged in conversation (e.g., Johnson, 1986, pt. III; Jung, 1997). Such integration of unconscious content and processes into conscious life facilitates psychic individuation.

### ***Binding and Release — Desmos kai Ekklusis***

Another theurgic operation is the binding (*desmos*) of another person, subjecting them to possession by a god or daemon, and their subsequent release (*ekklusis*) from possession. The possessed individual may be called the held-down one (*katakhos*), the seer (*theatês*), or recipient (*dokheus*). The latter term reveals the similarity of this operation to the ensouling of images, for the symbols and tokens are used to effect a simultaneous *projection* of the divine spirit onto the recipient, and a *possession* of the recipient by the spirit. Psychologically, the recipient is inspired or energized by a personified archetypal Idea or complex, and therefore can speak with its voice. Ancient texts recommend the use of children and naive individuals as recipients, for they are more likely to serve as “pure receivers” and “empty receptacles.” Prepubescent children are less likely to be possessed of sexual complexes and personal daemons, and therefore less likely to color the divini-

ty's voice with their own unconscious or conscious content. Easy and transparent possession by the divinity depends on both native talent (suitability, *epitêdiotês*) and acquired skill (hieratic power, *hieratikê dynamis*).

### ***Liaison — Sustasis***

The preceding operations might be used to facilitate the theurgical operation of *sustasis* (bringing together, meeting, introduction, friendship, alliance), which effects a *liaison* between the theurgist and a god or daemon. In psychological terms, the theurgist engages in a conversation with an archetypal personality or complex, in order to become consciously aware of its nature, needs, and inclinations. Conscious integration and accommodation of this unconscious content decreases the chance that it will result in unintentional and undesirable possession or projection. More positively, such complexes, and especially the Shadow complex, may be sources of untapped energy and inspiration, which may be recruited to advance spiritual progress, especially psychic individuation. Similarly, theurgists may use *sustasis* as a means of recruiting a daemon as a *paredros* (familiar spirit or assistant), who can aid in theurgical operations, including the theurgic ascent (see next). Psychologically, a complex is used to facilitate individuation.

### ***Theurgical Ascent — Anagôgê*<sup>19</sup>**

The last theurgical operation that I want to mention is the most important, the *anagôgê* or theurgical ascent. In all the preceding, the divinity is experienced as “other,” but in the *anagôgê* the theurgist ascends so that their soul, so far as possible, unites with the god; that is, they experience deification (*theiôsis*). 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 Self and by uniting with the archetypal Anthrôpos, the theurgist is better enabled to live a fulfilling life in accord with providence (*pronoia*). 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* (signs and symbols) 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 *onomata barbara* 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 *anagôgê* 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 daemons must be pacified. Separation is accomplished by the initiate enacting a symbolic *thanatos authairetos* (voluntary death), which therefore functions as a sensible *sumbolon*. Death-and-Resurrection is an archetypal Idea; therefore, through symbolic death and ascent the initiate participates in this Idea's *energeia* (actualization, energy) and actualizes it in themselves (i.e., the archetype manifests in them).

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<sup>19</sup>This section is adapted from MacLennan (2005).

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

### ***Higher Theurgy***

There is controversy over the relationship of the higher and lower theurgies, or even whether there is such a distinction (Majercik, 1989, pp. 35–6, 39–45); nevertheless, there is a basis for some distinction of this kind. As we have seen, a common feature of theurgic operations is to use symbols to activate a complex or archetype in the practitioner; in Neoplatonic terms, the daemon or god manifests in the theurgist's experience and he is filled with the divinity's *energeia* (activity, energy). According to the principle of "like knows like," contact will be more effective to the extent that the theurgist's soul is similar to the divine force being contacted. Therefore, in order to contact the higher divinities (that is, the deeper archetypes), which are further removed from the perceptible world, it is necessary to use correspondingly immaterial symbols. At the more material levels, the theurgist uses correspondingly material symbols (statues, stones, plants, animals, etc.); at higher levels, audible hymns, songs, and chants, and visible abstract figures may be used. Beyond that (at the level of the World Soul), physical action is abandoned and the symbols are imagined entirely in the theurgist's lower soul (*psychê*), immaterial, yet still enacted in time. To go higher (to the universal Nous), the lower soul must be quieted so that the individual *nous* can rest in the *energeia* of the eternal archetypal Ideas.

According to Proclus, immediately below the Inexpressible One are its images, the *henades* (unities), which correspond to the gods proper. Therefore, since "like knows like," the only way to contact the One and the gods themselves is by means of the unity that is in our individual souls, the highest part of our souls, which the theurgists call "the flower of the whole soul" (*pasês tês psychês anthos*); it comprises all our psychological faculties and transcends the opposites (conscious/unconscious, many/one, divided/undivided, etc.), that is, in Jung's terms, the individual Self. As the One is the unifying source of the entire macrocosm, so "the flower of the whole soul" is the unifying source of the microcosm of the individual soul.

Therefore, the higher theurgy strives to quiet all of the soul except for this highest part, for the One reposes in Silence (*sigê*), as do the gods. Proclus (*Plat. Theol.*, p. 62) says, "the theologians call the contact and union with the One *Pistis* (trust, faith)," for *Pistis* imparts Silence, which is superior to all cognitive activities, and is in the gods and therefore assimilates us to them (Proclus, *Plat. Theol.*, 4.9, p. 31). In this way, all the diversity within the soul is unified into its highest part, the Self, which is the flower of the whole soul and the microcosmic image of the gods and of the One. "The One that all the powers of the soul reverence is alone able to bring us to the Absolutely Transcendent (*to epekeina*) of all things" (Proclus, *Chald. Phil.*, fr. 4). Thus *Pistis* elevates the mind to the highest form of consciousness, union with the One, which Plato called the divine madness (*theia mania*). "This, friend, is the most divine operation of the soul, in which, working not by exterior motions but by interior, it becomes a god, insofar as that is possible for a soul" (Proclus, *Prov. Fato*, col. 172).



The curious Neoplatonic term for the highest part of the psyche, that is, for the Self, namely, “the flower of the whole soul,” may strike the reader as excessively poetic and somewhat arbitrary. Therefore, it is worth remarking that the “soul-flower” (or *seelenheilende Blume*) is known from several shamanic traditions, and that it symbolizes the microcosmic individualization of the central source of divinity, a symbol and agent of emerging individuation (Ryan, 2002, pp. 44–6, 53, 58, 186). The soul-flower is, of course, a particular variety of mandala (Jung, *CW* 9, i, ¶¶596, 604; 1972, *passim*). These images of the individual Self are associated often with a symbol of the Axis Mundi, the first cause and source, and a symbol of the path of ascent to that source. Therefore, the soul-flowers may appear as blossoms on the Tree of Life, which shows how the Self of each individual is rooted in the Inexpressible One. The branches of the tree are the *seirai* (lineages) of the gods.

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