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## ARCHETYPE AND EVERYTHING

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Archetypal theory in the late twentieth century is usually associated with the name of Carl Jung.<sup>1</sup>

Jung developed the notion of archetype as a way of accounting for the patterns he observed in human behaviour, both individual and collective, patterns which appeared to transcend history and geography, and which he believed could not be satisfactorily explained in terms of people's learning. He decided that these patterns must be innate in human beings, inherited along with physical traits, and that they give shape not only to our physical behaviour but also to our ways of imagining the world.

Jung's claim to originality in this is in his application of the notion of archetype to our psychological lives. He was very well aware that the notion itself has a long history, and his own thinking on the subject was very much influenced by those who had thought about it in the past. The most significant of these, at least in the European tradition, was Plato.

Plato is usually credited with being the originator of the theory of archetypes, but he was working with ideas which had been current in Greece for a couple of hundred years at least, and which had become central to the classical Greeks' way of imagining the universe. For Plato, as for Pythagoras, Socrates, Sophocles and Aeschylus, it was apparent that the universe was ordered by first principles which transcend personal and concrete experience. In the ancient myths they were represented as immortal gods and goddesses. In the language of the philosophers they were called Ideas, Forms, Absolute Principles or Archetypes.

Whether or not we are believers, we have probably inherited from Judaism and Christianity a rather narrower definition of a god than the Greeks had. The god we believe in, or disbelieve in, is a supreme being to whom can be attributed all kinds of qualities which we imagine are appropriate to such a being. So we imagine God as supremely good, supremely powerful, supremely loving, supremely just, supremely beautiful, and so on. The Greeks seem to have gone about their theologising from the opposite direction. In their world also they were able to observe goodness, power, love, justice and beauty, and found goodness, power, love, justice and beauty to be immortal, independent of human beings, larger than human lives, existing before the individual who manifests them and enduring after

the individual is gone. To their way of thinking, goodness and power and the rest must be gods, and should be honoured as such.

When we look around our world and observe that there are many people and objects which we wish to describe as "beautiful" we are inclined to think of the people and objects as the primary reality and beauty merely as a quality which we attached to them. For Plato it was the other way around. For him, the Idea of Beauty was obviously much more substantial and enduring than of the transitory objects which may happen to be beautiful. For Plato, Beauty comes first, before beautiful people or beautiful things.

Beautiful objects are a very limited expression of the Idea of Beauty, and when we claim that one object is more beautiful than another we are measuring them both against the absolute standard of the Idea. Beauty, says Plato, is not an abstraction which we derive from looking at a lot of beautiful objects. It is not just a human idea, but exists of itself, without a need for human minds to think about it. Beauty is more real than the objects which manifest it or the sense impressions through which we are able to perceive it. It is timeless and constant, immaterial, transcendent, and far superior to the concrete world.

For Plato, then, there exists a realm of pure Ideas or Forms. These universals give shape to the concrete world. They also give shape to our thoughts. Just as Beauty and Roundness and Redness and Sweetness manifest themselves in concrete form in an apple, they also manifest themselves in our concept of an apple. Our mind is ordered by the same archetypal structures as give order to the universe. Accordingly, according to Plato, we should be able to see through the particular to the universal, through appearances to the primary essences. Plato assures us that it is possible for the trained intellect<sup>2</sup> to experience the Ideas or Forms directly, and suggests that this is the true purpose of philosophy. For Plato, the world of the senses, which we take to be the real world, has only a derived and secondary reality. The primary reality is the archetypal reality and our lives are a rather foggy participation in it.

Plato is one of the most influential thinkers in European history, or human history for that matter. With his teacher, Socrates, and his student, Aristotle, he witnessed, and greatly influenced, a major shift in consciousness. The period in which he flourished saw the European mind establish its notions of rationality, and set itself on the way to a scientific understanding of the universe.

It was not only scientific thinking which flourished in Athens in Plato's time. His contemporaries also experienced the flowering of a different kind of thinking, mythical thinking, which was immeasurably more ancient than the rational thinking which Socrates and Plato taught.

Between the eighth and fifth centuries B.C. a critical event had occurred in Greece and elsewhere<sup>3</sup>. Human beings developed a new way of thinking which was fully realised in the thinking of Plato and Aristotle in the fourth century. This emergence of discursive or abstract thought totally changed the relationship between human beings and their world. They became able to stand outside their world and reflect on it. They even became able to stand outside themselves, finding themselves not merely conscious, but conscious of their own consciousness. They became fully aware of themselves as individuals, aware of cause and effect, able to act in a directed way on their world, no longer submerged in their environment and social group. Before this time, thinking, if we can call it thinking, involved the receiving and shaping of images, not the manipulation of concepts, and identity and collective, not individual. It is conventional to call this earlier kind of thinking "mythical."<sup>4</sup>

The development of rational thinking followed at least a million years of human evolution. As far as we can guess, primitive humans were governed by instinct, and their consciousness was exceedingly dim. In this archaic consciousness they had no sense of themselves as individuals, no sense of time and space, and lived in a state of ego-less unity with their environment. Their relationship to nature was dominated by impulse and instinct. With the emergence of *homo erectus* (about 750,000 B.C.), we find signs of human beings acting in a world of differentiated objects, exercising some control over them through the use of simple tools. There was as yet no sense of personal identity nor any ability to distinguish the part from the whole or internal experience from external. They seem to have experienced no sense of identity apart from the clan, and their world was a world of numinous power which could be dealt with only by magic. They had little language and their lives were totally enmeshed in the rhythms of nature. After the last ice age (about 12,000 B.C.) this primal, "magical" or "mythical" thinking, took human experience from an instinctual/emotional mode to an imaginative one. Humans ceased to experience themselves as being totally merged with nature. We see the beginnings of individual consciousness, the differentiation of self from other, the separation of internal and external awareness, the expression of human experience of the cosmos in image and story, in the spoken, and sung, and written word. Through the power of imaginative or "mythical" thinking they were able to develop the sophisticated civilisations and complex societies of the ancient world, and with them the great narratives which expressed their experience of the universe.

It was only after 1000 B.C. that the "mental" structure of consciousness began to emerge in Greece and elsewhere. People became capable of rational and directed thought, began to identify being with thinking rather than feeling, to be aware of time, space and quantity as we commonly understand them today.

The emergence in the Greeks and other ancient peoples of the ability to

think abstractly, did not mean that they ceased to think mythically. Indeed, we still think magically and mythically as well as rationally, whether we acknowledge it or not.<sup>5</sup> The kinds of consciousness which evolved thousands or hundreds of thousands of years ago still survive in us as the underlay of our rational thinking. We are inclined to equate consciousness with the sense of self we experience at the mental level. Yet we constantly shift between this mental-rational consciousness and the more primitive structures which preceded it. Even the word "primitive," which we can reasonably apply to pre-rational levels of consciousness, has unnecessarily pejorative associations.

There is no need for us either to assume that the course of evolution is a course of inevitable improvement, or to romanticise the richness and harmony of magical-mythical cultures. We still slip; back into our archaic unity-consciousness in sleep, or enter it voluntarily or involuntarily through trance, drugs or certain kinds of meditation. We operate at the magical level when we submerge our identity in that of a group, when we experience events or objects as numinous, when we engage in rituals designed to make things happen or make us feel good, when we come close to a loved one by kissing a photograph or share in the power and glory of a football team by wearing the club colours. A great deal of healing, both physical and psychological, takes place within a magical structure of consciousness. When we sense in our bodies the pain or joy of a loved one, even in their absence, when we know something "in our bones," when we join feelingly in religious worship, we find ourselves in our magical consciousness. When we think that we have gained control of some process by giving it a name or label we are involved in magic. It is a form of magic which seems to have a particular attraction for economists and politicians.

We engage in mythical thinking every time we dream or day-dream, every time we watch television, read a novel or a poem, or tell stories about ourselves, receiving or constructing the world in images without any need or attempt to translate them into thoughts. Every metaphor comes from our mythical consciousness. When we give a human name to a car or boat, or talk to an inanimate object as though it can understand us, or get angry with it because it will not do what we want it to, we are thinking mythically. Our mythical thinking enables us to admire and love a work of art even when we would be hard pressed to explain what it is about or why we like it. It is our mythical consciousness which insists on hanging on to primitive, natural, human measurements like inch and foot and yard in spite of the convenience of the rational metric system. It is our mythical consciousness which induces us to change our behaviour after hearing a story which has engaged us, and which binds us to a partner or a group of friends through the stories we tell about ourselves.

Some would argue that this is a primitive and inferior form of thinking which has little value in the modern world. Others would claim that

mythical thinking remains a very effective way of dealing with the world, and that it is our capacity for mythical, and even magical, thinking that enables us to find meaning in our lives and gives us a grounding in the concrete world which rational thinking seems bent on destroying. It makes more sense to say that magical and mythical consciousness are neither better nor worse than rational consciousness. They are simply older and different.

The debate about the value of mythical thinking is not new. The Greeks of Plato's time were certainly involved in it. There was a great deal of scepticism about the old stories of the gods, and there were claims that intellectually sophisticated people did not take them seriously any more. At the same time, the tragic theatre, which was at the heart of Athenian civilisation, saw the development of an increasingly subtle and complex treatment of the myths, in which the gods appear as personifications of archetypal principles which order both the universe at large and the personal experience of men and women.

Plato's position in this debate appears to have been ambiguous. He seems to have taken both sides simultaneously. He criticises the poets for talking about the gods as though they are larger and more powerful versions of human beings. Yet he often personifies the gods in his own writing. Sometimes he discusses the Forms in an abstract way; often he prefers to write about characters and incidents from the myths. To explore the significance of Love and Beauty and Power in our lives, he relates and interprets the stories of Eros and Aphrodite and Zeus, and he does not make it clear whether he intends us to accept the gods as real divine personalities, poetic personifications of archetypal Ideas or simple metaphors of different perspectives on life, different psychological attitudes or different kinds of experience. His position seems to recognise that we have two distinct ways of dealing with the world. We may have thoughts about it, or we may form images of it. Both approaches are equally valid. We cannot claim one is more "true" than the other.

The mythical framework against which Plato developed his rational discourse about the nature of the universe was an extraordinarily rich and complex one. It had a number of sources: in the mythology of the ancient, goddess-worshipping culture of the Greek peninsula; in that of the Greek-speaking nomadic warriors from the North who conquered it after 2000BC., bringing with them their worship of the Sky-god and his family; in the mythologies of Western Asia where fertility was worshipped in the person of the Great Mother. The coming together of these influences produced a patriarchal public religion focused on the major Olympian gods, and private cults of the ancient goddesses, characterised by fertility rites and ceremonials of death and rebirth. The richness and power of both these traditions has been confirmed again and again through history, even when it was being denied. Both christianity and science are embedded with the images of the Greek pantheon.

Plato's archetypal theory has also proved remarkably resilient. Aristotle continued to explore the notion of Ideas or Forms, though he argued that they are not transcendent and autonomous, but immanent in matter. Plato's thinking was very influential in the development of theology in the early Christian church, and Augustine was as much a Platonist as a Christian when he argued that the Archetypes were the original creative ideas existing from all eternity in the mind of God. The medieval theologians debated vigorously about the existence and independent reality of the archetypes.<sup>6</sup> Aquinas followed Aristotle in acknowledging their existence, but maintaining that they do not have independent existence as pure autonomous Ideas; we know them only because we experience them in the concrete realities of life. Astrology and alchemy developed as different expressions of archetypal thinking. The Renaissance, in Italy as elsewhere, saw archetypal thinking aligned once again with a fascination for the Greco-Roman gods in whom the Archetypes were seen to be personified, and a tendency to take these gods seriously as manifestations of ultimate reality. Renaissance scholars and artists found a new appreciation of the human imagination as a means to expand our consciousness of these Forms, and a delight in the use of myth and allegory to communicate psychological insights.<sup>7</sup>

The Renaissance also saw the beginnings of the modern scientific age, which had less and less time and sympathy for mythical thinking. However, the theory of archetypal Forms persisted. European science from Copernicus to Newton was driven by a desire to discover the timeless mathematical forms which shape the world. However, after Newton had demonstrated that the universe was a huge machine it became unnecessary to explain its behaviour in terms of mystical and transcendent Forms. Scientists took a less mystical view of mathematics and began to search for the changeless Laws which govern the universe rather than the changeless Forms which manifest themselves in it. The pagan gods nevertheless continued to dominate the arts, and seem to have mixed happily and on an equal footing with the Christian archetypal images of Jesus and the saints and angels.

The casual polytheism of renaissance art and literature reflects, as we might expect, a preference for mythical thinking and a sense that we live in a universe where truth is multiple and complex. In reaction to this flowering of paganism the Church (in both its Catholic and Protestant versions) became increasingly rigid in its understanding that truth is one and unambiguous and revealed by God. As Science gradually took the place of Christianity as the consensus religion of the European modern age, it inherited this doctrine of the singleness of truth. It was obvious to the scientists and philosophers of the Enlightenment that human intellect was capable of discovering all there was to know about the universe.

Yet the pagan gods would not go away. While the scientific mind pursued its conviction that the world was composed of concrete, material things and

that the truth about its workings would turn out to be essentially simple, there was developing another kind of mind, the romantic mind, which insisted on seeing concrete reality as symbolic of a deeper reality, which saw imagination as the true ground of our existence, and acknowledged that there are many perspectives, many metaphors, through which the world can be interpreted. Rousseau and Kant in the eighteenth century drew attention to the limitations of human reason and suggested that we should attend to and interpret our subjective experience of the world, rather than pursue the fantasy of an objective, transcendent truth which we are capable of comprehending.<sup>8</sup> Where the scientific mind found no room for the notion of the sacred, the romantics were inclined to see the sacred everywhere and certainly had no inclination to limit themselves to the conventional Christian perspective. Art itself was seen by many as a religious activity, and the artist was proclaimed to be a prophet called to reveal the many faces of God. When romantics looked at the world they saw no facts but images of a deeper reality; they saw the world mythically. Those, like Goethe, who wanted to combine this vision with a scientific analysis of nature continued to find in Plato's archetypal theory a means to do so.<sup>9</sup>

The beginning of the twentieth century was marked by the publication of Freud's great work on the unconscious. *The Interpretation of Dreams*, which showed how the scientific mind could apply itself to symbols and their interpretation. It was also marked by the death of Nietzsche, whose proclamation that "There are no facts, only interpretations" has sounded with increasing resonance as the century grows older. It has to become conventional in a "postmodern" world to abandon the notion of an absolute truth, to talk in terms of alternative perspectives or competing paradigms. In such an intellectual climate, it is not surprising that we should see Plato being taken seriously again, and to find archetypal theorists talking about psychological polytheism.

When Jung came to attempt his own scientific analysis of people's experience of themselves and the world, he found Plato's ideas invaluable. But when Plato could claim to be stating the facts about the nature of the cosmos, twentieth century scientists have to be more humble. Jung accepted the ideas that we do not know the world as fact, but only know our subjective experience of it. Nevertheless, he was determined to be objective about our subjectivity, to establish the facts about the way we experience the world. He believed that he could prove the existence of the archetypes, not as absolute essences but as aspects of our experience. Like Freud, he saw himself first of all as a scientist. What he was engaged in, as a scientist, was establishing the facts of psychology. Freud was devout in his efforts to explore the nature of the unconscious mind which, he maintained, controls the behaviour of each one of us. Jung became convinced that beyond this "personal" unconscious, there is "collective" unconscious, common to all human beings. He found enough evidence to persuade him that this collective unconscious is structured according to powerful principles which, following Plato, he called archetypes.<sup>10</sup> While

it seemed obvious to him that our behaviour is conditioned by personal, local and historical factors, he observed that at a deeper level there are universal patterns operating.

Jung tried to keep his conclusions within the limits appropriate to science. His methods could tell him nothing about the absolute Forms which Plato spoke of, but they could tell him a great deal about certain powerful and universal images which he felt could rightly be called archetypal, and which he suggested are the manifestations of Platonic Forms which are not directly knowable. He made much of this distinction between the Archetype in itself (which we cannot know directly) and the archetypal images which appear in our myths, our dreams, and our arts.<sup>11</sup>

Jung, following Plato, was inclined to understand the archetypes as pre-existent forms which are replicated again and again in nature and in our experience. These Forms, as he understood them, are unchanging patterns without content. They are always unconscious; when they emerge in consciousness it is as an image, which draws its content from history, culture and biography. However, he had more than one way of defining archetype. On the one hand, he called the archetypes "primordial images," but he also wrote of them as "instinctual patterns of behaviour" which are genetically inherited, and as "modes of apprehension" which shape our encounter with reality. They were for him both the guiding patterns of evolution and its product. They were manifested physically in our instincts, intellectually in the meanings we construct, religiously in the gods we worship, psychologically in our personalities, pathologically in our diseases, politically in the ways we organise our societies. At the collective level he found archetypal images in cultural movements, national and racial consciousness, in passing fashions, in shared illusions. He found them shaping our needs, our beliefs, our visions, our values and our prejudices.

In attempting to understand how these archetypal patterns are experienced and how they overlap and interact with each other, Jung followed Plato's example and explored the Greek myths. We can learn a great deal about the power beauty has over our lives and the relationship between our experience of Beauty and our experience of Love, Craft and Aggression by listening to the ancient stories about Aphrodite and her relationship to Eros, Hephaistos and Ares. Not that the Greeks invented these stories in order to make statements about Beauty, Love and Aggression. Long before literature was invented, they experienced these energies as living personalities and told stories of the ways they interacted with each other and with humans. The stories were not "thought up" to explain anything. On the contrary the stories were always there, and the lives of ordinary people acquired meaning by entering into these stories through religious ritual. The myths and the rituals came before the thinking and the explaining.

Among contemporary Jungian theorists there are some who refer to themselves specifically as "archetypal psychologists." The central figure in this group is James Hillman.<sup>12</sup> Like Jung, his examination of the patterns to be found in human behaviour and culture focuses on the imaginal or mythical level of consciousness. Hillman argues that since we cannot know whether the archetypes actually exist as entities, there is no point in talking about them in this way at all. What we do know is that we experience archetypal images of great power. He argues that the images don't stand for something more "real" than themselves, but are the way in which reality is experienced by human beings. He does not make Jung's distinction between the personal and collective aspects of the unconscious, so that for him every image is an archetypal image, and these archetypal images structure all our experience and behaviour. For Hillman, the proper work of psychology is seeing through our personal and collective experience to the archetypal image behind it. He wants us to see the world metaphorically. He argues, in fact, that we have no other way of seeing it. For Hillman, even our rational-logical thinking is to be understood as a manifestation of our more deeply grounded imaginal or mythical consciousness.<sup>13</sup>

Some archetypal psychologists continue to consider archetypes in Plato's sense as primary essences. Some, like Hillman, consider them to belong to the imaginal world. Some identify them with instincts. Some do not commit themselves to any position at all, but talk in archetypal language and engage in archetypal analysis simply because it provides a useful and persuasive way of looking at the patterns they find in human behaviour. Whether, like Plato, we acknowledge the archetypes as real entities which are manifested in the concrete world, or acknowledge them only as ways in which our subjective experience happens to be patterned, they appear at all levels of consciousness. At the archaic level we find them in our basic drives. In our magical consciousness, they are present in our rituals, in our superstitions, in our bodily sensations, in group consciousness and mass movements. Our mythical consciousness resonates with archetypal images found in our language, our art, our myths and our dreams. In our mental consciousness they take the form of ideas, theories, values, perspectives, including the ideas, theories, values and perspectives we are discussing or expounding here.

As long as we accept some notion of archetype, at whatever level we experience it, we accept a notion of the plurality of truth. In the late twentieth century, science has abandoned the notion of a single, objective, discoverable truth. So have philosophy and common sense. Many people still find fundamentalism attractive (economic and political as well as religious) but it has become conventional to talk about truth and value and ethics as relative. There is general acceptance of the notion that what is true and worthwhile and right depends, to some extent at least, on the context and the point of view. For some this means simply that nothing is true or worthwhile or right, that life has no meaning, that nothing has

importance, but for others this polytheism of values is liberating and energising. Archetypal theory offers a way of thinking about meaning in this sort of world.

Archetypal theory also offers a way of thinking rationally and scientifically about mythical thinking, and of thinking mythically and imaginatively about rational thinking. More particularly, it gives us a language for talking about culture, society and personality, a language which has emerged from dealing imaginatively with the world for thousands of years, in contrast to the language of science which is a fairly recent development. If we look at the images which inform the way we talk "rationally" about education, politics, economics or the environment, we will find the substrate of magical-mythical thinking present in the most self-consciously scientific discourse. We will find, often enough, that the images which shape our understanding of the world right now, are very similar to those which shaped the understanding of the Greeks three thousand years ago.

The gods of the ancient Greeks represent key configurations of truths, values, needs, drives, perspectives, visions, instincts and images which have been dominant in European culture in the last three thousand years.<sup>14</sup> In interpreting these divine images in terms of culture and personality, or in seeing through behaviour to the archetypal fantasies which shape it, archetypal theorists have the assistance not only of Homer and Plato, but of Sophocles, Vergil, Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, and all the others who have found in the gods powerfully resonating metaphors for the energies which inhabit the human condition.

Jean Gebser argued many years ago<sup>15</sup> that in the twentieth century we have been going through what he called the "deficient" phase of the mental-rational structure of consciousness. He observed that the narrow, abstract, individualistic, rational consciousness of the modern era had lost its contact with concrete experience, with feelings, with the body, with natural rhythms. He saw, in Nazism and elsewhere, a regression to the more primitive magic structure, based on instinct, animal impulse, submersion of the individual in the collective, a dependence on the magic of names and symbols. He found the magic and mythical structures of consciousness manifest mainly in deficient, deteriorated forms. He saw barbarism at the gates once more, but believed neither in the inevitability of progress nor the certainty of catastrophe. It seemed to him that we can only extricate ourselves from our present crisis if we learn how to integrate the whole of our human experience into our awareness.<sup>16</sup>

The operations of the mythical and magical structures of consciousness can be efficient or deficient, skillful or inept, appropriate or inappropriate, creative or destructive. If we become disenchanted with rationality, aware of its limitations, even convinced that it is responsible for the mess we are in, we should not assume that shifting our faith from rationality to myth

and magic will improve things. Hitler managed to engineer such a shift in a considerable number of people, with devastating consequences. The flowering of all kinds of fundamentalism on the one hand and some kinds of "new age" thinking and life-styles on the other seem to display movement in the same direction, from disenchantment with a sterile rationality to enthusiastic adoption of a magical faith. However, we can re-acknowledge and re-own our magical and mythical consciousness without regressing to a more primitive consciousness, without abandoning our rationality. Gebser argues that our mental consciousness is in a process of mutation into something richer and fairer, in which the magical and mythical are integrated with the rational.

The humans of a million years ago, with their archaic consciousness, could have no sense of what magical consciousness might be. The magical consciousness of Neanderthal and Cromagnon peoples could have no feeling of how the world could be experienced mythically. The mythical consciousness of the peoples of the Bronze Age could not imagine what rational and discursive thought might be like. Neither can we feel, or imagine, or conceptualise, what kind of consciousness might next emerge. Like Gebser, we can only look at the evidence that some sort of movement is taking place, estimate its direction and make guesses about its destination. For the present, Gebser's guess that the intellectual turmoil of the twentieth century signals a movement in the direction of an integral, non-dualistic consciousness<sup>17</sup> seems as good as any, and a good deal more optimistic than most.

While one does not advocate either a return to polythesitic religion or a regression to magical and mythical modes of thinking. There is quite enough magical and mythical thinking going on in education and elsewhere, and a good deal of it is, to use Gebser's euphemism, "deficient." Rather, this is an attempt to use archetypal theory to draw attention to the mythical and magical thinking which is covert in educational theory, policy, and practice, so we may become more aware of and more critical of what drives us. It is my belief that archetypal theory offers a mode of thinking which moves towards integrating our mental rational consciousness with the structures which subsist beneath it, and provides a way for our imaginal and kinesthetic<sup>18</sup> wisdom, individual and collective, to be once again acknowledged.

## Footnotes

1. Jung's ideas on archetypes and our relation to them are found throughout his writings. Excellent commentaries on Jung's archetypal theory will be found in Edward Whitmont, (1969). The symbolic quest. Princeton: Princeton University Press, and in Andrew Samuels, (1985). Jung and the post-Jungians. New York: Routledge.
2. According to Plato, the best training is the study of mathematics. Above the door of his academy was the inscription: "Let no one enter here who does not know geometry." To Plato's way of thinking, mathematics offers its students the most direct access to the timeless principles which order this apparently chaotic world. Experiencing Oneness, Plurality, Circularity, Equality as pure ideas leads the student to an experience of pure Goodness, Truth and Beauty. Plato's ideas about mathematics show the influence of the much earlier philosopher, Pythagoras.
3. The same phenomenon is apparent during the same period in China, Palestine, Persia and India.
4. This outline of the evolution of human consciousness follows the research of the Swiss cultural philosopher Jean Gebser (1905-1973). Gebser distinguished five "structures of consciousness" which characterise successive phases of human evolution. He talks in terms of "mutations" from one structure to another. He labels the consciousness of the earliest humans *archaic*. The consciousness of stone age people he labels *magical*, while the beginnings and development of urban civilisations belong to the *mythical* structure. The *mental* structure, which enabled the development of classical civilisations, went somewhat into abeyance in Europe, at least, with the collapse of classical civilisation, but re-emerged in the thirteenth century. Gebser argues that we are involved in a new consciousness mutation at the present time, from the *mental* structure to an *integral* structure, which re-incorporates the more primitive levels and in which time, space and rationality are transcended. See Jean Gebser was first published in 1949. The current edition is Jean Gebser, (1984). The ever-present origin, trans. N. Barstad, Ohio University Press. Similar notions of the evolution of consciousness have been developed by Erich Neumann, (1970). The origin and history of consciousness (also published in 1949), English edition, trans., R.F.C. Hull, Princeton: Princeton University Press, and by Ken Wilber, (1981). Up from Eden: a transpersonal view of human evolution. Old Woking, Surrey, GB: Unwin Bros Ltd. See also Georg Feuerstein's commentary on Gebser's theories, (1987). Structures of consciousness. Integral Publishing.
5. The development of consciousness in the individual appears to follow a path similar to that of the species. Our intra-uterine experience seems to be characterised by archaic consciousness, the first two years of infancy by magical consciousness (Piaget's sensorimotor stage, Freud's primary process), and our childhood up to about seven years of age by mythical consciousness (Piaget's concrete operations). Ken Wilber applies a Gebserian model of consciousness evolution to personal development in (1980). The Atman Project. Wheaton, ILL.: Theosophical Publishing House.

*"We must first of all remain cognisant that these structures are not merely past, but are in fact still present in more or less latent and acute form in each one of us."* Jean Gebser, 1984, p. 42.

6. The influence of Plato's ideas had continued after the collapse of classical civilisation in the writings of the Christian bishop Augustine (354-430) and of Boethius (475-525), a Christian Roman aristocrat who set out to preserve the best of Greek and Roman thinking in the dying years of the Roman Empire. His digests and commentaries were preserved and studied in the monasteries.

Plato's ideas were also preserved and developed in the Arab world, and when European scholars discovered this tradition in the twelfth century, they seized it eagerly. The Arab neoplatonists had a critical influence on Aquinas (1225-1274), who dominated medieval Christian thinking.

7. The fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks (1553) caused many Byzantine scholars to migrate to the West. They brought with them copies of Plato's writings in the original Greek, so that European scholars were no longer dependent on second-hand and christianised versions. Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), Ficino (1433-1499) and Erasmus (1466-1536) represent the revival of classical humanism and its energetic exploration of Plato's ideas.
8. For Kant (1724-1804), Plato's Ideas are to be found in the organisation of the human mind. The structures of the universe are subjective ones. We construct the universe according to the structures of our minds. R. Tarnas (1991) in The Passion of the Western Mind, comments on this:

*...Kant had drawn attention to the crucial fact that all human knowledge is interpretive. The human mind can no more claim mirrorlike knowledge of the objective world, for the object it experiences has already been structured by the subject's own internal organisation. The human being knows not the world-in-itself but rather the world-as-rendered-by-the-human-mind....The gap between subject and object could not be certifiably bridged (p. 417).*

9. Goethe (1749-1832) argued that the romantic striving for unity with nature was as valuable a path to understanding as the detached observation and abstract speculation of the conventional scientist. He disagreed with Kant's proposition that the human mind simply imposes its order on nature. He argued that since nature is everywhere, including the human mind, the latter is simply the instrument of nature's self-revelation.

Hegel (1770-1831) looked to Greek philosophy, German romanticism and Christian mysticism in his attempt to develop a systematic theory of the way our experience relates to reality. He saw human reason as an expression of Universal Mind, which is unfolding itself through human history. Every "truth" which human beings arrive at through reason and experience is partial, imperfect and contradictory (though appropriate to its time and place), and must inevitably be abandoned and replaced by another partial truth, as absolute truth gradually unfolds itself. Truth, as we know it, is inevitably paradoxical: absolute truth transcends paradox.

10. Jung expressed some contempt for metaphysics, and considered that speculation about the meaning of life was rather pointless. He saw his own work as empirical science. It is ironic that the present popularity of his work derives largely from its appeal as metaphysics, rather than its status as science.
11. Nevertheless, he often refers to Archetype when he appears to mean archetypal image.

12. See James Hillman, (1983). Archetypal Psychology. Spring Publications.
13. *All consciousness depends on fantasy images. All we know about the world, about the mind, the body, about anything whatsoever, including the spirit and the nature of the divine, comes through images and is organised by fantasies into one pattern or another...Because these patterns are archetypal, we are always in one or another archetypal configuration, one or another fantasy....*James Hillman, (1976). Peaks and Vales: The Soul/Spirit Distinction as Basis for the Differences between Psychotherapy and Spiritual Discipline, in J. Needleman and D. Lewis (Eds.), On the Way to Self-Knowledge. Knopf.
14. There are close affinities between the Greek pantheon and the Celtic, Nordic, Italic and Hindu pantheons, all of which show the merging of the Indo-European sky-gods with the gods of a conquered fertility-culture.
15. J. Gebser, 1984, p. 3.
16. Gebser's (1984) notion is that in the emerging integral consciousness each structure will become transparent to our intelligent awareness:
 

*The magic, mythical and mental structures may...become transparent, particularly in their ever-valid effectualities as our co-constituents. This is a beginning if only because the individual begins to see himself as a whole as the interplay and interrelationship of magic unity, mythical complementarity, and mental conceptuality and purposefulness. Only as a whole man is man in a position to perceive the whole.* (p. 531.
17. Gebser deals in some detail with the evidence of the evolution of a new structure of consciousness--aspatial, atemporal, aperspectival, arational. His evidence comes from mathematics, the natural sciences, psychology, the social sciences, music and the visual arts. Since he developed his theory in the 1940s such evidence has continued to accumulate. Writers such as William Irwin Thomson, Fritjof Capra and Stanislav Grof have made significant contributions to our understanding of "the emerging paradigm."
18. I understand the wisdom which belongs to our ancient, magical structure of consciousness to be carried in our body's felt sense of the world.