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# Images, Figures and Qualities: Clarifying the Relationship Between Individual and Archetype

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C. G. Jung (1937/1958) described archetypes as collective patterns of consciousness that are catalyzed into the individual human experience. This paper will examine the role of culture and history in the relationship between the timeless and imageless archetypal qualities such as self sacrifice, presence, love; the culturally agreed upon archetypal figures, which may include mythological characters and deities that have some shared cultural meaning; and individual instances of archetypal images, which might show up in a dream, or in a particular religious icon. The examples in this paper will demonstrate how, out of a collective cultural need for representation, a figure emerges to capture archetypal qualities, to embody them so they can come alive as an interactive force, available to the individual psyche. Specific examples of cultural myth-making will be considered, including George Washington, Mother Teresa, Che Guevara, and Jesus of Nazareth.

**Keywords:** *Jung, transpersonal, archetype, culture, individual, collective*

C. G. Jung described the collective unconscious as, “an unceasing stream, or perhaps an ocean of images and figures which drift into consciousness in our dreams or in abnormal states of mind” (Jung, 1931/1969 [CW8], para. 674). This quote from Jung describes the relationship between the collective unconscious and archetypal images. On the other hand, Jung defined archetypal images as those, “of a collective nature which occur practically all over the earth as constituents of myths and at the same time as autochthonous, individual products of unconscious origin” (Jung, 1937/1958, par. 88). It is important to note that Jung was defining archetypal images here, rather than the term, archetype. Jung (1931/1969 [CW8]) has stated that “archetypes present themselves as ideas and images, like everything else that becomes a content of consciousness” (para. 435). However, while the image is the content of subjective consciousness, the image that is experienced is far from the extent of the archetype itself.

This paper will go a step further and offer distinctions between the timeless and imageless *archetypal qualities* (such as self-sacrifice, presence, love), the culturally agreed upon *archetypal figures* (including mythological characters, saints, and deities), and the

individual instances of *archetypal images* (such as stories or paintings) that represent these qualities. A canon of archetypal images weaves together the collective impression of an archetypal figure. What makes the figure archetypal is that it is thematically related to other figures through similar qualities.

While archetypes may be connected to esoteric qualities, these qualities cannot be defined entirely by any individual theme or image. Figures generally take on cultural forms in their representations and legacies, and it is through these cultural representations that the images come alive. In the interest of further defining these archetypal structures, this paper will examine how individual and cultural forces assign certain historical figures to embody archetypal qualities so that they can come alive as an interactive force, available to the individual psyche. Individual stories serve as specific images that evoke and depict these figures and qualities. The argument will be made that the process of immortalizing an archetype involves the partly conscious and partly unconscious dissolving of the individual in the interest of the collective, by way of the identification with specific images and groups of images over others. This will involve an examination of some historical figures who have

come to represent archetypal qualities. A transpersonal examination of archetypes can involve incorporating both spiritual and psychological sources. Thus, in the examination of the nature of archetypes, this paper will enlist sources from within, but also external to analytical psychology, in an attempt to deepen and enrich the conversation. In their meta-analysis of the transpersonal literature, Hartelius, Caplan, and Rardin (2007) noticed three functional definitions of the prefix *trans-* in the term *transpersonal*, including (1) trans as beyond, as in beyond-ego psychology; (2) trans as pervading, as in integrative/holistic psychology; and (3) trans as changing, in the context of the psychology of transformation. This paper, explores the nature of archetypes as beyond-ego, in that they transcend the individual; pervading, in that they are vertically integrated through experience, culture, and concept; and transformative, in that they transform individual and cultural experiences.

### **Archetypal Images in Relationship to Figures and Qualities**

Archetypal images relate to archetypal qualities by way of and in interaction with the intermediary archetypal figures. This interaction must happen in both directions, downward, from theme to image, and upward, from archetypal image to archetypal figure. In Ferrer's (2002) participatory view, transpersonal states and spiritual experiences are transforming encounters with the world, rather than private delusions. In this way, the interaction is a conversation, upward to downward and back again. This perspective can be seen as parallel to Hillman (1975) and his post-Jungian archetypal psychology, who pointed out that the Greeks and Romans,

personified such psychic powers as Fame, Insolence, Night, Ugliness, Timing, Hope, to name a few. ... Many consider this practice as purely animistic, but it was really an act of ensouling; ... when these were not provided for, when these gods and daemons are not given their proper name and recognition, they become diseases. (1975, p. 13)

Hillman (1975), whose approach was more phenomenological, pointed out that, "personifying not only aids discrimination, it offers another avenue of loving, of imagining thing in a personal form so that we can find access to them within our hearts ... [and] personifying emotionalizes, shifts the discussion from nominalism to imagination, from head to heart" (p. 14).

This is an image of the experience of archetypal images as deeply personal and subjective.

In the upward, mythmaking, image-to-figure direction, Horvath, Geybullayeva, and Bakhlysh (2012) defined "some methods of formation of archetypes," (seeming to refer to what is here defined as archetypal figures, rather than archetypal qualities, which are timeless):

- canonization (the Bible's standards for approving texts, images)
  - representation (of historical fact or belief in fiction or art)
  - adaptation (depiction of depicted texts, units in different texts and art genres)
  - translation (into different languages)
  - plagiarism (in the light of the above, as the borders between copying and new interpretation are fluid)
  - hypertext (borrowing the known archetype and making a new interpretation)
  - fan-fiction (continuation of a known text, or character, by fans in their reinventive creation)
- (p. 15)

That these processes can all play a role in archetype formation is a demonstration that there are individual and cultural forces at work in the mythmaking, which is sometimes and in some ways conscious and unconscious. It is possible to see all of these methods of formation (Horvath, Geybullayeva, & Bakhlysh, 2012) as interdependent, rather than mutually exclusive. In the examples that follow, a number of these processes will be evident.

One can now begin to see more clearly the relationship first described earlier in this paper between the personal *archetypal image*, which might show up in a dream, or in an individual religious icon; the *archetypal figure*, which has some shared cultural meaning; and the *archetypal qualities* connected to the images and figures. These three qualities of an archetype are listed in order, from most personal to most collective, respectively. The examples that follow will demonstrate how out of a collective cultural need for representation, a form emerges to capture an ideal for an archetypal quality.

### **Symbols and Meaning**

There are both individual and collective considerations in how symbols communicate and

contain meaning. The phenomenological philosopher Edmund Husserl (1913/1931) would say that a symbol is subjectively assigned meaning through the act of perception. This would be a description of the individual process of symbolic meaning-making. Religious symbols are culturally influenced, but their meaning is individual. To Merleau-Ponty (1962), symbols are how one bridges between subjectivities. This symbolic function of perceived objects is what makes them symbolic. Communication happens through symbolism. It is how intention crosses between people.

What Merleau-Ponty (1962) called *style* is the categorization of perceptions of action and experience into functional groups for the purposes of expression and communication. With some intention in mind, people make gestures or actions. One way this happens is through speech, which is what Low (2001) called “a vocalization of our lived emotional encounter with the world” (p. 70). Anyone who perceives this gesture or action likely has some idea of its meaning. To Merleau-Ponty (1962), this is how symbols, including religious symbols, translate among subjective experiences.

To Paul Tillich (1958), symbols “cannot be produced intentionally” because they are unconsciously accepted (p. 42). He felt they move autonomously in individual psyches, “like living beings, [symbols] grow and die” (p. 43). Their lives are carried by their own momentum. Their force and meaning is generally not consciously determined by the individual in whose psyche they dwell and they do not self-determine. To Joseph Campbell (2008), “symbols of mythology are not manufactured; they cannot be ordered, invented, or permanently suppressed. They are spontaneous productions of the psyche, and each bears within it, undamaged, the germ power of its source.” (p. 21).

The vehicle and content of religion and spirituality is primarily symbol (Tillich, 1958; Jung, 1964/1970). To Jung (1964/1970), a symbol is the tangible representation of some intangible aspect of the collective human experience. It is a categorization of an abstract pattern that is reflected in everything from cognition to behavior, from dream to idea. Religions are essentially systems of symbolism that can be seen, especially in mystical religions, as guides for development. If God is mystical and ineffable, then the tradition tends to focus on lived experience of states of consciousness, as Levenson and Khilwati (1999) discussed in terms of the Sufi *dhikr* ritual. If God is personified, then God or god images can

serve as beacons of certain human-like characteristics, which may guide by example towards some set of predefined or implicit spiritual goals (Jung, 1964/1970). Archetypal images, especially ones in human form, fall into this latter category.

To Tillich (1958), “letters and numbers and partly even words” are symbols in that they “point to something beyond themselves” (p. 41); the symbol “participates in that to which it points” (p. 41). In other words, the symbol perpetuates the values ascribed to it. Furthermore, he believed they open up “levels of reality which otherwise are closed for us” (p. 41). By this Tillich meant symbols represent abstract concepts and an experience of the soul. This is especially the case for archetypal symbols. In this sense, archetypal images have personal symbolic relevance. The images point symbolically to archetypal figures, are constellated in the collective imagination through a collection of images. Both archetypal images and figures point towards archetypal qualities, which are formless and transcend them both.

#### **From Complex Human to Simplified and Mythologized Archetypal Image**

There is a story about George Washington who, as a six-year-old boy, received a new hatchet and used it to chop down his father’s cherry tree. When confronted, he famously replied “I can’t tell a lie. I did cut it with my hatchet” (Weems, 1918, p. 23). This story has captured the public imagination and comes to help George Washington represent, in part, virtue and honesty. Now it is certainly possible that, at other times in his life, George Washington did lie. The primary evidence that one is given is this story itself. If there are counterexamples, these are not supplied. Whether there is sufficient historical evidence of this story being an actual historical event remains contested (Bedard, 2014). However, this story acts as a canonical excerpt of his biography that serves to allow Washington to represent these certain qualities. Basking in the reflection of the virtuous glow of the founding father and first president, the story is an image that allows the United States to identify with his virtue in surrogate. Despite the country’s actual historical record, this story is iconic of the myth of American exceptionalism. While history tells a far more complex tale, this story helps to foster an image of the United States as a nation that can put aside personal advancement in the interest of virtue.

Mother Teresa has become a universal image of service, self-sacrifice, and faith. However, when her private letters emerged, it became clear that she suffered from depression and struggled with a loss of faith, all the while leading the model life that has come to represent her (Zaleski, 2003). Zaleski (2003) noted:

It is hard to know what is more to be marveled at: that this twentieth century commander of a worldwide apostolate and army of charity should have been a visionary contemplative at heart; or that she should have persisted in radiating invincible faith and love while suffering inwardly from the loss of spiritual consolation. (p. 3).

Another example is that of Jesus. The gospel of Mark, historically the first of the three key synoptic gospels, is widely believed to have originally ended after the discovery of the empty tomb and before the resurrection (Porter & Holmen, 2011). This was already decades after Jesus' death. All of the accounts of the resurrection were written several decades after Mark. At this point, Jesus was no longer the complex historical person, with likes and dislikes, fears and desires. He was now an icon, mythologized by time and attention, perhaps in response to a collective need. He has now come to represent qualities such as compassion, mercy, and self-sacrifice. Discussion of this particular phenomenon is mostly conjecture. However, through exploring the beatification of more recent historical figures, one may be able to gain insight into the sociocultural and psychospiritual forces that shape archetypal imagery in general and that hereby cemented Jesus as such a powerful image in the collective psyche.

All of these figures can be seen to represent specific archetypal qualities. As living human beings, they were far more complex than the iconic characters that have come to represent these qualities.

### **Human Identification with Archetypal Qualities in the Making of Self Figures**

**I**n the constellation of the story of a human being into an archetypal image, there may be a conscious personal endeavor of the individual to move beyond their personal life story and dedicate themselves to an ideal beyond themselves, for example in the case of Evita Perón and her dedication to the poor (Bosca, 2005). When it comes to consciously-engaged virtue, one can understand this as the precondition for an archetypal

theme such as a saint to begin to contain the meaning of an archetypal quality. Alternatively, if an individual comes to represent more negative characteristics, such as Adolf Hitler, for example, it is perhaps more likely that their legacy was an unconscious, destructive byproduct of their ideals.

The Self archetype is a regulating center of the psyche, guiding towards wholeness (Jung, 1958). What makes the Self archetypal is that such figures share qualities that are common to the human experience in this striving towards wholeness. To Jung (1958),

The self is defined psychologically as the psychic totality of the individual. Anything that a [person] postulates as being a greater totality than [oneself] can become a symbol of the self. For this reason the symbol of the self is not always as total as the definition would require (Jung, 1958, para. 232).

Different Self figures and images may represent specific cultural or individual values in their prioritization of certain qualities. According to the theologian Paul Tillich (1958), humans symbolically focus on what he called an "ultimate concern," which can be spiritual or something as mundane as money, which is "made into a god" (p. 44). An ultimate concern, according to Tillich "must be expressed symbolically" (p. 44). The qualities attributed to god images are present in the subjective experience. Cultures project the epitome of such values onto the divine. Power becomes omnipotence, knowledge becomes omniscience, and good becomes the very perfection of goodness. When mundane concepts are elevated to the place of central importance usually reserved for ultimate concerns, Tillich (1958) called this "idolatrous" (p. 44). Specific states and stages of consciousness are sometimes given the place of ultimate concern along certain religious paths, instead of God images.

Eva "Evita" Perón dedicated herself to being in service to others and self-sacrifice, died young, and was immortalized for these qualities (Bosca, 2005). These were her ultimate concerns and, through the natural evolution of her as a symbol, Evita as an archetypal theme, she came to represent these qualities in the collective imagination. She even came to be a stand in for the Virgin Mary in Argentina, including in prayers taught to schoolchildren.

As polarizing as he may be, Che Guevara is also someone who fought to the death for something in



which he believed. Guevara “consciously led his life as a revolutionary, an iconoclast, a person operating above the common fray. Born an Argentine, reborn a Cuban, and fighting for the people in Cuba, South Africa, and ultimately in Bolivia, Che could portray himself as a soldier of freedom” (Passariello, 2005, p. 88). The cause for which he fought was larger than himself and beyond any individual. His cause was an ideal, perhaps unachievable in its entirety, but he gave himself over to it completely and, in doing so, came to represent it. Passariello (2005) observed that “the young Che died still desperately seeking something—he was not complete nor fulfilled. He had not found all of the answers. But what he lacked, he lacked grandly. And he died pursuing, questing to fill a void” (p. 89).

Mother Teresa, another person who followed a lifelong mission, endeavored “always to be transparent to Christ, and in that very transparency her inner life was hidden” (Zaleski, 2003, p.1). At great cost to her personal comfort, she lived a life in service to the poor. She essentially lost her individuality through her dedication. She came to represent generosity and self-sacrifice itself. Zaleski (2003) observed that this journey caused her to subvert her own personal experience, even her emotions themselves, into an act of self sacrifice:

This was exactly the way Mother Teresa learned to deal with her trial of faith: by converting her feeling of abandonment by God into an act of abandonment to God. ... And it gave her access to the deepest poverty of the modern world: the poverty of meaninglessness and loneliness. To endure this trial of faith would be to bear witness to the fidelity for which the world is starving. "Keep smiling," Mother Teresa used to tell her community and guests, and somehow, coming from her, it doesn't seem trite. For when she kept smiling during her night of faith, it was not a cover-up but a manifestation of her loving resolve to be 'an apostle of joy.' (Zaleski, 2003, pp. 5-6)

### **Birth of an Archetypal Figure**

Out of this ground of an ultimate concern and sacrifice of the individual, a process of mythologizing then needs to take place. In some cases, this may happen through a combination of unconscious and conscious selection of specific images, such as stories that demonstrate certain values, and which may happen in the process of canonization. The example of Jesus, and the difference between how he is seen in Christian

scripture and in what is conjectured of a historical Jesus can serve as illustration.

To Aslan (2013), Jesus was, in his time, a revolutionary leader, whose central message was a political opposition to the abuses of the Temple in Jerusalem. He was a Jew as were the members of his audience, all of whom would have understood his message within the context of the sociopolitical landscape of his day, of the Hebrew scriptures, and of the common oral tradition. His gestures of riding into Jerusalem on a donkey (John 12:12-19) and overturning the money changing tables in the temple (Mark 11:15-19, Luke 19:45-48) would have been seen as political protests, direct challenges to the authority of the Temple.

Aslan (2013) pointed out that Jesus did not refer to himself as Son of God or even probably as messiah. However, the title of Son of God is attributed to others, especially David in 2 Samuel 7:14; Psalms 2:7, 89:26; Isaiah 41:1. What Jesus did call himself was “Son of Man” and this may actually be a title that was used in his lifetime. Scholars generally agree that Jesus’ understanding of this term would have come largely from the Biblical book of Daniel, and, to Aslan (2013), this title was likely more political than spiritual:

when Jesus calls himself the Son of man, using the description of Daniel as a title ... he is stating, albeit in a deliberately cryptic way, that his role is not merely to usher in the Kingdom of God through his miraculous actions; it is to rule that Kingdom on God's behalf. ... Recognizing the danger of his kingly ambitions and wanting to avoid, if at all possible, the fate of others who dared claim the title, Jesus attempts to restrain all declaration of him as messiah, opting for the more ambiguous, less openly charged title “the son of Man.” (p. 143)

Long before Jesus, there was a prophecy that the messiah would be born in Bethlehem, David's home city (Aslan, 2013). Aslan observed that the earlier Gospel of Mark is uninterested in Jesus' younger life. However, as Jesus' legend grew, detractors pointed to his birth in Nazareth as contradicting the Davidic prophecy. Perhaps as an answer to this, the historically later Gospel of Luke tells that Jesus' parents had to travel to the place of his father's birth, identified in this narrative as Bethlehem, to be counted in a census. Aslan noted that there was a census historically, but it would have been as much as ten years before Jesus was born, and it did not include people

living in the Galilee, including Nazareth. Additionally, the census would have counted people where they lived and not where they were born. Thus, it is possible to see this as an example of how the myth of Jesus grew around the interaction between the expectations and needs of the culture, unrelated historical fact, and the narrative account of Jesus.

Another example of a similar process can be found in the depiction of the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist. In the Gospel of Mark (Mark 1:9–11, likely composed about 70-71 C.E. (37 - 41 years after Jesus' death), John is presented as mentor and baptizer to Jesus (Aslan, 2013). In the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 3:13-17), likely written between 90-100 C.E., John reportedly proclaims that it is Jesus who should be baptizing him, until Jesus gives him permission to perform this act. In Luke (Luke 3:21-22, King James Version) also probably written 90-100 C.E., John is no longer the agent in Jesus' baptism, Jesus is simply "baptized" (Aslan, 2013, p. 87). Note that the status of Jesus relative to John the Baptist is elevated in accounts that are believed to be historically later.

The Apostle Paul, who authored or is written about in about half of the books of the New Testament, is not concerned with "Jesus in the flesh" (Aslan, 2013, pp. 186-187). Instead he is focused on the Jesus that presented himself to Paul in a blinding vision on the road to Damascus, leading to Paul's conversion (Acts 9:1-19). Aslan (2013) noted that there was no point in Jewish thought prior to Jesus during which such an idea as God made flesh had ever existed. However, there were many fleshy gods in the Roman pantheon, and that Paul had mainly focused his energies on converting Roman gentiles and Jews in the diaspora. Accordingly, Aslan (2013) proposed that Jesus' transformation from political activist to demi-god was influenced by Greco Roman theology rather than Jewish thought or belief. When the Nicene Creed was established in 325 C.E., on Constantine's behalf, by "nearly 2000 bishops," (Aslan, 2013, p. 214), the church doctrine became that Jesus was the physical manifestation of God. All those who thought Jesus was less than an immortal God were then exiled or violently suppressed. When the New Testament was canonized in 398 C.E., fully half of it was comprised of books by or about Paul and this image of Jesus as God-made-flesh.

Far fewer people personally knew Jesus of Nazareth, Che Guevara, Mother Teresa, Evita Peron, or

George Washington, compared to the many hundreds of millions or even billions who are now familiar with them. They are remembered not for their complexity, but for the ideals that drove them and the qualities that their legacies have come to represent. They have become archetypal figures.

## Archetypal Figures

### Representing Contrasting Archetypal Qualities

One can gain additional insight into the process of canonizing an archetype through the examples of archetypal figures that represent contrasting archetypal qualities, as determined by culture. Che Guevara has, in some cultures, come to be iconic of the idea of revolution and rebellion in all of its forms, and his image itself has taken on a symbolic power (Passariello, 2005). Sites and relics in Cuba associated with him, for example the boat that he and Fidel Castro first took to Cuba, are treated as sacred. But Che was a complex person, known at times for his brutality, for his passion, for his adventurous nature. He was a doctor. He had asthma. However, Passariello (2005) asked:

Do we remember Che sucking on his inhaler? No, we remember Che at the height of his glory, in Korda's larger than life photograph where he embodies larger-than-life emotions and aspirations and displays a larger-than-life, transcendent essence. Like a saint. (p. 89).

Che is an example of a culturally-contextual archetypal figure, who is beatified within Cuba and in like-minded cultures, but can also serve as an archetypal figure representing more destructive qualities (Passariello, 2005). That there are stories available about both his idealism and his brutality allows one to choose which image of Che to constellate. Che is a relatively recent historical example, so there are more extant examples of his complex character than for, say, Jesus. Opinions of the virtue, or lack thereof, in Che Guevara, are likely related to the observer's own political ideals and confirmation bias.

To shed further light on this dynamic, one can consider the role of negativity bias in politics. According to a metastudy by Hibbing, Smith, and Alford (2014), political conservatives consistently have stronger psychological and physiological responses to negative stimuli. Studies have also demonstrated that an uncomfortable environment can increase the severity

of moral judgments (Schnall, Haidt, Clore, & Jordan, 2008) and decrease flexibility of attitudes (Ackerman, Nocera, & Bargh, 2010), even through the subtle reminder of disease in the presence of hand sanitizer (Helzer & Pizarro, 2011). Dodd et al. (2012) found that, in a collage of images, conservatives spent significantly more time looking at angry faces than did liberals. Similarly, conservatives showed increased amygdala activation during risk taking, when compared to liberals (Schreiber et al., 2013).

There is also evidence that conservatives are more likely to experience a situation as threatening (Culotta, 2012; Schaller & Neuberg 2008). There is even evidence that threats and reminders of mortality can make people more conservative (Bonanno & Jost, 2006). It is clear from these findings how a culture may be oriented towards perceived threat and the need for protection on the one hand, or towards a culture of optimism and open-heartedness on the other (which would, from the perspective of its reciprocal culture, be perceived as paranoid on the one hand or naive on the other). When one takes into account personality factors, the culture at large, messages in the media, and political perspectives, the effect can be even more pronounced (Hibbing, Smith, & Alford, 2014).

These findings are reminders of how one's phenomenological experience of a symbol is shaped by context. From within a conservative versus a liberal paradigm, it is clear how an individual archetypal image or figure, such as a politician, or such as Che Guevara, might be seen in very different light, and might thereby represent different archetypal qualities. Joseph Campbell (2008) explained:

Jesus, for example, can be regarded as a man who by dint of austerities and meditation attained wisdom; or on the other hand, one may believe that a god descended and took upon himself the enactment of a human career. The first view would lead one to imitate the master literally, in order to break through, in the same way as he, to the transcendent, redemptive experience. But the second states that the hero is rather a symbol to be contemplated than an example to be literally followed. The divine being is a revelation of the omnipotent Self, which dwells within us all. The contemplation of the life thus should be undertaken as a meditation on one's own immanent divinity, not as a prelude to precise

imitation, the lesson being, not "Do thus and be good," but "Know this and be God." (pp. 294-295)

### **Accessibility of Archetypes to the Individual Human Experience**

While dreams typically depict personal patterns (though they can also depict transpersonal patterns), mythology spreads and catches on because it taps into something inherent to the human psyche. Jung (1948/1969) said that "primitive mentality does not *invent* myth, it *experiences* them" (para. 261). The symbolic themes that arise in myths, also arise in dreams. Similar symbols and symbolic themes occur across cultures. There is something captured in the image that is inherent to the human experience, something relatable. According to Sharp (2001), behind every complex is an archetype or group of archetypes, the pattern that is associated with that human drama. These complexes form the structure of the personality itself and of the concept of self, as differentiated from other.

To Kalsched (2013), a complex is comprised of an archetypal core and a relational trauma. This perspective points also towards the importance of the learning through personal experience in general, including through trauma, in making the archetypal image relevant to the individual human experience. Murray Stein (1998) wrote that, in the individual experience of an archetype, "prior to the trauma, the archetypal image exists as an image and a motivating force but does not have the same disturbing and anxiety producing qualities of the image" (p. 54). When the archetype has been activated in the individual psyche, it has a phenomenological power; it animates a complex. Now the associated qualities and emotions can be experienced through the context of the images.

Jung (1964/1970) held repression of unconscious archetypal forces responsible for the development of neurotic symptoms (p. 89). To consciously engage with the archetypal images, rather than being unconsciously motivated by the patterns, helps to foster psychospiritual transformation. This engagement can be a dialogue, simultaneously with a part of oneself and with a deeply human motif.

### **Non-Egoic Intelligence**

When trauma locks egoic perception into complexes, input is needed from beyond the ego to shift these patterns. Archetypes come to be a form of *non-*



*egoic intelligence*, or that which can be accessed through the unconscious, through the divine, and through other people.

The experience of this encounter can be quite disrupting to the ego, as Neumann (1968) explained:

For the ego, this mystical encounter with the non-ego is always an extreme experience, for in it the ego always moves toward something which lies outside of consciousness and its rationally communicable world. This area situated outside of consciousness is indeed, from the viewpoint of the total personality which it has transformed, the creative area *par excellence*, but from the viewpoint of consciousness it is an area of nothingness. (p. 383)

One way of viewing this release from the rigidity of the ego is as a conversation between the conscious and unconscious minds, or the individual ego and the collective. Even through human conversation—for example, through a therapist’s perspective of curiosity and not-knowing toward the client—one can access the “inconspicuous guide who takes us by the hand,” leading toward new insights and the release of creative blocks (Heidegger, 1966, p. 60). In conversation, spontaneity provides a vehicle for the unexpected. When a conversation is directed by more than one egoic force, there is a greater potential for release. Also, when the individual ego engages in conversation with a non-egoic intelligence such as an archetypal image, the egoic rigidity can be released.

#### **Archetypal Images as Doorways to Archetypal Qualities**

Once the archetypal image has been canonized into culture, these images offer a doorway back to the qualities they represent. They are now a potential psychospiritual tool. Tillich (1958) spoke of the symbol as the function that “opens up levels of reality which otherwise are closed for us” (p. 48). If the autonomous process of infusing images with meaning is a downward movement, from archetypal quality to archetypal image, then the human connection with the images is an upward movement, from archetypal image to archetypal quality. The images hereby provide a doorway to the qualities that they represent. One figure, however, may be a doorway to a number of archetypal qualities. For example, Jesus might be experienced as divine child, self sacrifice, compassion, and so forth.

To Stein (2010), an archetypal perspective allows a glimpse into the developing psyche, what the psyche is trying to do, or in the process of developing, rather than simply where it is. Especially in consciously engaging with Self symbols, the archetypal figure can be a guiding force:

What actually creates the therapeutic effect in Jungian analysis is the increasing amplitude of a person’s experience of the Self. Wholeness is experienced. This experience, moreover, usually brings along with it an influx of new energy and vitality ... increased creativity ... synchronistic events ... often surround experiences of the Self, [which] ... contribute to ... a sense of meaning, direction, and destiny. (Stein, 2010, p. 36)

The experience of the archetype is one that *feels* important. Corbett (1996) stated that the “numinous experience is often specifically relevant to the psychology of the individual who experiences it” (p. 15). Corbett indicated, “when an archetype is felt relatively directly within the psyche, its effect is numinous and it is felt as Other. Phenomenologically, there is no difference between these experiences and those described as the experience of spirit in the religious literature” (p. 60).

#### **In Conclusion**

In clarifying the process of archetype formation within culture, and in relationship to the subjective experience, becomes possible to define how archetypal images and figures relate to archetypal qualities. Examples have illustrated how individual and cultural forces assign figures to embody archetypal qualities so that they can come alive as an interactive force, available to the individual psyche. In consciously engaging with the archetypal images, and understanding their many facets, we can come into relationship with them in the way that best serves the purposes of individuation.

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