



Idol-worshippers depicted in the Dura-Europa Synagogue in upper Mesopotamia, ca. 3 CE.

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# Jung and the Neo-Pagan Movement

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## ABSTRACT:

Neo-Paganism, one of the fastest-growing religious movements in the world today, has undergone a series of profound transformations in structure, belief, and symbolism over the past 50 years. One of the most significant is the appropriation of Jungian analytical psychology by broad sectors of the neo-Pagan movement and by some of its most eloquent proponents, such as Margot Adler, Miriam Simos, and Vivianne Crowley. However, the application of Jungian methodology as a means of legitimating religious belief is not as simple or unambiguous as neo-Pagan writers and conversely, critics of Jung such as Richard Noll, would attest. This paper explores the appropriation of Jungian theory by sectors of the neo-Pagan movement. It also examines the neo-Pagan movement's rather ambivalent relationship with Jung's interpretation of the human psyche within the broader context of western modernity.

## KEY WORDS:

neo-Pagan, witchcraft, New Age, ritual, Goddess, Jung, mythology

While there is little evidence that the formative period of the neo-Pagan movement was influenced by Jungian methodology, the popularization of Jung's work in the 60s and 70s proved to be enormously influential in providing neo-Paganism with a theoretical model and language with which to legitimize its religious beliefs, ritual practices, and historico-cultural identity. In the formative period of the 1940s neo-Pagans, like their predecessors in the 19th century spiritualist movements, legitimized their beliefs by appropriating a variety of romanticist histories and interpretations of folklore. Writers such as James Frazer, Jules Michelet, and Margaret Murray were principal exponents

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of this approach. Gerald Gardner, founder of the Wiccan movement, claimed that contemporary neo-Paganism was a linear descendant of a pre-Christian Pagan fertility cult, persecuted during the witch hunts of the late middle ages. The model of witchcraft and neo-Pagan history postulated by Gardner was an almost literal reconstruction of the model of witchcraft persecutions presented in Margaret Murray's "Witch Cult in Western Europe" (Murray, 1962). Gardner combined this with an ideological affiliation with romantic thought and a folkloric variant of English nationalism. This pattern of claiming empirical support for a contemporary model of witchcraft and paganism, by borrowing from romanticist historians and collated examples of folklore, was the standard format for legitimating neo-Pagan beliefs, symbols, and rituals in the formative years of the neo-Pagan movement.

The conception of spirituality in Gardner's vision of a pagan witchcult eschews constructions of the divine, the mystical, or psycho-spiritual transformation of Judeo-Christian traditions. Rather, it claims that witchcraft should be practised and revived, primarily because it is an authentic English religion tied to an eternal and uniquely English national identity. This authentic English religious identity is manifested in folklore and ritual allied to an ideology of liberalism and romantic anti-modernism.

While Gardner drew on mythological and folkloric sources extensively, his work tended to utilize them haphazardly. They are most frequently applied in accordance with the symbols and images associated with the "merry England" of romanticist poets and artists. The neo-Pagan model established by Gardner resonates with the ideals and imagery of romantic thought. The focus of belief is profoundly worldly with divinity perceived to be immanent in the natural world and not separate from the physical. Spiritual expression is focused in the sense of community or *communitas* experienced in the practice of collective ritual, a sense of heritage imbued in an invented tradition rooted in English folklore and history and a philosophy of life embracing Gardner's conception of liberation from the stultifying and arbitrary burden of Christian belief and industrial modernity. Gardner felt that embracing a reconstructed Paganism would serve as an antidote to the dehumanizing and artificial impact of industrialism and the taxonomizing effect of technology

and rationalism. Symbolically, Gardner's model of neo-Paganism draws heavily on an idealized view of nature and a constructed vision of an eternal English heritage closely resembling the "merry England" of Byron and Tennyson, albeit with an underlying Pantheist/Pagan belief system (Crowley, 2002; Gardner, 1954, 1959).

This method of constructing witchcraft beliefs, symbols, and heritage came under serious challenge from historians and folklorists. The romanticist hypothesis of the early modern witchcrazes, being a systematized persecution of pre-Christian paganism, had been under systemic empirical attack since the 1920s and by the late 1970s had been almost completely discredited. Murray's thesis of a pre-Christian fertility cult had come under particularly critical scrutiny. Continental European studies based upon very localized empirical studies of Witchcraft had become increasingly available in English and the evidence demonstrated that history bore very little resemblance to the model of Witchcraft beliefs portrayed by romanticist historians and folklorists. Furthermore, the claims of several of the primary leaders of the neo-Pagan movement, most notably Gerald Gardner, also came under question. It was found that much of the material he claimed originated with a secret coven of witches in rural England was, in fact, derived from his interpretations of Hindu manuscripts and the ritual magic of Aleister Crowley and other occultists and spiritualists of the early 20th century (Guiley, 1992, pp. 411-424; Hutton, 1999, pp. 217-220; Bishop and Chapin-Bishop, 2000, pp. 48-55). It became increasingly doubtful whether he had actually met with any surviving witches at all. Even Gardner's closest associates, Doreen Valiente and Ray Buckland, began to claim that while they believed the core of his ideas came from actual experiences with a surviving cult of witches, much of his writings reflected attempts to fill the gaps in his data with projections from his own studies in anthropology and ritual magic (Hutton, 1999, pp. 207-208; Valiente, 1989, pp. 41-42; Waldron, 2001, pp. 16-22).

The ultimate result of these attacks on Gardner's model of Witchcraft and Paganism was that his reliance on claiming empirical legitimacy for what proved to be an invented religious tradition, had become a liability for his Wiccan movement and, more importantly, many neo-Pagans began to realize that empirical

legitimacy was only peripherally related to the practice and experience of being Pagan. In this context, many neo-Pagan writers, most notably Starhawk (1989), Vivianne Crowley (1989), and Margot Adler (1986), inspired by the increasing popularity of Jung's work in the 60s and 70s, took an alternative approach. Using Carl Jung's theories as a tool for understanding the role of the symbolic and the spiritual in human experience, and relying on his concept of the collective unconscious, they described witchcraft history as representative of universal psychic truths, independent of empirical history. From this perspective, the increasingly problematic fixation on empirical history as the primary legitimizing factor in religious belief could be eschewed and the rich network of symbolism, mythology, and spiritual belief could be explored in terms of psycho-cultural resonance of religious archetypes and mystical experiences (Adler, 1986, pp. 28, 30, 31, 44, 88; Starhawk, 1989, pp. 22-24).

Margot Adler is perhaps the most prominent and influential neo-Pagan advocating a Jungian approach as a means of providing historical cultural identity and authentication of various rituals and symbols within the neo-Pagan movement. Her study of the neo-Pagan movement within the US, *Drawing Down the Moon*, is heavily based upon a Jungian approach towards religious symbolism. She proposes the primary significance of psychological and cultural symbols emanating from within the collective unconscious, rather than relying upon specific claims of historical legitimacy. She writes, "Goddess worship has an ancient universality about it but it appeared in different places in different times" and, "The Old religion may not have existed geographically or historically but existed in the Jungian sense that people are tapping into a common source." These observations are typical examples of neo-Pagans taking a Jungian approach to the significance and impact of symbols in religious belief and spiritual experience (Adler, 1986, pp. 56-58, 59, 90).

According to Adler, this idealizing of the spiritual and the symbolic is very common throughout the neo-Pagan movement and has largely come to supplant the reliance upon empirical claims to historical authenticity espoused by traditionalist neo-Pagans during the 1950s. In a series of interviews, she verified that many neo-Pagans focused on symbolic experience as an indicator of

past legitimacy. This focus is illustrated by statements such as, “When you are doing a ritual and you suddenly get the feeling that you are experiencing something generations of your forebears experienced, it is probably true.” Other neo-Pagans Adler interviewed claimed, “It doesn’t matter whether the grandmother was a physical reality or a figment of our imagination. One is subjective, the other objective but we experience both.”

What these statements indicate is that the fundamental issue of truth and legitimacy in many neo-Pagan validations is based upon symbolic impact, pop-

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ular appeal and the psychic experience manifested in ritual practices. These truths are perceived as existing in their own right, independent of issues relating to empirical veracity (Adler, 1986, pp. 56-58, 59, 90). From this perspective, empirical history is perceived as largely irrelevant. What is relevant is the psychic reality of symbolic representations arising from the collective unconscious.

Jungian understanding of the nature and function of the symbolic has proved to be an invaluable model for the legitimization of Pagan rituals, mythology, and historical narrative. By giving priority to the psychic significance of symbols that have arisen from the collective unconscious, neo-Paganism has attained a means of legitimating Pagan ritual outside of empirical history, while at the same time ensconcing itself within the framework of a coherent and relatively respectable psychological and epistemological framework. In this, it has found a contemporary authentication for Pagan beliefs and practice. From this Jungian perspective, the rituals and symbols of the neo-Pagan tradition are not so much

valued in terms of their indexical relationship to a particular Pagan tradition of the past but rather as indices of a development into psychological maturity. If radically different cultural traditions are integrated together, such as those of Native Americans and pre-Roman Celts, it is not perceived as a violation of cultural authenticity but rather, recognition of the common source of mythological symbolism in the collective unconscious and the universal search for psychological development. Prominent Australian neo-Pagan author, Cassandra Carter, comments on the significance of Pagan ritual in terms of its capacity to explain Jungian models of psychic development.

In Jungian terms the descent of the Goddess teaches the need for a woman to go on her own quest in search of her *animus*—not waiting for the knight on a white charger who will rescue her from the need to make her own choices, but going to confront the Dark Lord and solve his mysteries—going of her own choice and will into the Kingdom of the Unconscious mind. For a man, he has been successful, with the help of the Goddess, his anima, in exploring and winning the battles within his own unconscious, and he and she are happily reunited in the underworld of the unconscious. (Carter, 1992, p. 6)

The impact of Jung's works upon the neo-Pagan movement led to profound changes in the nature of neo-Pagan approaches to history, culture, and spirituality. The focus of neo-Pagan approaches to history shifted from one of esoteric ritual and empirical claims to historical legitimacy, to a search for images and archetypes that evoked strong emotions, a sense of affinity or cultural impact. More specifically, many members of the neo-Pagan movement began to search for images and symbols in mythology and popular culture that could be interpreted, via Jung's theoretical perspective, as universal archetypes located within the collective unconscious. This adoption of Jungian theory was combined with a strong symbolic orientation towards the representations of the past and the mythical. It was now possible to apprehend these images and rituals as a source of signs and symbols in the struggle to achieve psychological wholeness or, in Jung's terms, integration.

Vivianne Crowley's textbook for witches, *The Old Religion in the New Age*,

is a particularly pertinent example of Jung's impact on the neo-Pagan movement. While the book is certainly based on Gerald Gardner's Wiccan movement and the history of Murray's *Witch Cult in Western Europe*, Crowley also incorporates Kundalini meditational practices and Hindu rituals into the practice of Witchcraft. As a practising Jungian psychoanalyst, she bases the rationale for her work firmly in Jungian theory. She argues that the capacity to integrate the practice of Wicca with the symbols, mythology, and rituals of other traditions is a metaphor of a person's rise to self-fulfilment through the attainment of psychological integration. For Crowley, the growth of neo-Paganism is intrinsically linked with its appropriation of Jungian discourse, even as one's struggle to find religious expression is intrinsically linked to a search for psychological wholeness. Jungian discourse readily translates into the language of magic and mythology, and the language of Jungian analytical psychology flows naturally for practising neo-Pagans because it "reflects back to them their own spiritual experiences." In fact, the entire text of *The Old Religion in the New Age* is replete with references to the work of Jung and the utilization of Wicca as a manifestation of Jungian analytical psychology in practice (Crowley, 1989).

The appropriation of Jungian thought and, in particular, Jungian-based understandings of magic, miracles, Gods, Goddesses, masculinity, femininity, ritual, enlightenment, and symbols, has had a pronounced influence on the neo-Pagan movement since the onset of the 60s counterculture. This is particularly evidenced in the works of Starhawk, Aiden Kelly, Margot Adler, and Laurie Cabot (1993). The emphasis in these works is on psychic reality, experiential impact, and Pagan consciousness rather than historical authenticity or adherence to doctrine. The emphasis is not on proving the historical veracity of particular forms of Pagan belief nor is it on adherence to ritual processes. Rather, it is focused upon a "Pagan consciousness" which manifests itself around several prominent themes:

- a: Divinity is not manifested solely in an abstract deity who imposes his will from heaven.
- b: Divinity has both masculine and feminine elements and is manifest in many different forms and symbols.



- c: Pagans should live in close concert with nature and natural rhythms and cycles rather than being part of a techno-centric culture.
- d: Paganism is based in the pursuit of cooperation with people in their community and represents a constant struggle for personal growth and spiritual fulfillment.

There is a consistency in the movement of neo-Paganism away from empirical historical verification towards a validation that lies in the almost mystical realms of the collective unconscious. The essence of neo-Paganism, according to Michael York (2000, p. 7), resides in its sympathy with the rhythms of the earth, its capacity to apprehend those aspects of being which lie beyond the rational, that are, in some sense, touching on the elemental powers of the earth. Jung's proposition of the existence of the collective unconscious and of the interplay of anima and animus in the human psyche, resonates closely with the ideology and ontological construction of neo-Paganism, now recast in terms and concepts more consistent with an empirical exploration of the human psyche.

It should not be assumed however, that this was simply an attempt to circumvent the unsustainability of empirical claims to historical legitimacy. Jung's model of interpretation of the role of religious belief, symbolism, and mythology also provided a much needed framework through which neo-Pagans could express their beliefs and experiences in terms that the broader society could understand. More specifically, the adoption of Jung's holistic approach to culture, perceiving the historical origins of symbols as fundamentally interwoven and dependent upon the transcendent significance of the collective unconscious, has given the neo-Pagan movement a theoretical model that can accommodate a diverse range of forms, rituals, and symbols. Furthermore, the Jungian perception that images of divinity and the sacred are representative of archetypes within the collective unconscious has given the neo-Pagan movement a conceptual framework within which it has been possible to accommodate polytheistic religious belief. As Margot Adler writes,

Much of the theoretical basis for a modern defence of polytheism comes from Jungian psychologists who have long argued that the

Gods and Goddesses of myth, legend and fairy tale represent archetypes, real potencies and potentialities deep within the psyche, which, when allowed to flower permit us to be more fully human. (Adler, 1986, p. 28)

Similarly from a neo-Pagan perspective, Vivianne Crowley argues that the central issue in Jung's model of religious experience is that of *religare* or rejoining (Crowley, 2002). Through mythology and the embracing of the unconscious, as manifested through deeply resonant archetypal symbols, one can find wholeness and a sense of reconnection in a fundamentally alienated and disconnected world.

For many Jungian inspired neo-Pagans the struggle for psychological wholeness and connectedness is a struggle against the enlightenment definition of progress and universal taxonimization, rationalization, and industrialism. It is, at the same time, a re-shaping of the psychic experience of the present as a means to progress. Similarly, neo-Pagans are intensely focused on representations of the past and the mythological as a means of coming to a recognition of the self. It is not surprising that the neo-Pagan movement recognized aspects of Jungian theory with which they could identify and, consequently, incorporate into their own religious framework. This identification and incorporation has also provided the neo-Pagan movement with a teleological orientation, a vehicle that enables its existence to span both the past and the future with intellectual and conceptual integrity. Neo-Pagan adaptation of the Jungian psychoanalytical framework is based upon a fundamentally romanticist notion which posits human creativity and connectedness as the essential ingredient in the fulfilment of human potential and constructs the image of human progress within a continual reinterpretation and reconstruction of the past.

This paradigm shift in defining neo-Pagan identity is further illustrated by York's article *Defining Paganism*. York argues that neo-Paganism, as a religious tradition, is particularly difficult to define because of the breadth of cultural forms utilized by Pagans. The sheer quantity of different cultural associations within Paganism and Witchcraft is such that any definition relying upon cultural forms and rituals is impossible. Instead, he argues that neo-Pagan movements

are linked by their shared attitude towards culture, nature and spirituality, and at the heart of this shared perspective is an underlying cultural questioning, deeply rooted in a romanticist critique of modernity.

Accordingly, to Jungian neo-Pagans, it is in the broader context of a profoundly rationalistic and taxonimizing approach to the world and the human condition that the increase in belief systems seeking an emotive, more primitive, and earth-bound response, have abounded in the last few decades. In a world where the irrational, primitive, and symbolic aspects of the unconscious psyche are denigrated, it is natural for people to feel a yearning for a psychic experience, something to fill the void created. From this perspective, Jungian psychology provides a notional and intellectual framework by which the growth of the neo-Pagan movement can be interpreted. It is also in this context that Jungian analytical psychology has provided a framework in which the deepest, most archaic impulses of the human psyche have a healthy place to function and in which they may claim legitimacy within the contemporary context. It is thus not surprising that in the last few decades, neo-Paganism, with its traditional deep affiliation to the cycles of nature and to the arcane, is one of the movements that has most enthusiastically embraced Jungian concepts.

The approach to Jungian theory currently utilized by the neo-Pagan movement is thus heavily entrenched in a strongly romanticist critique of modernity in which modernity is caricatured as harbouring profound and slavish allegiance to rationality and logic. The stance has some difficulties. Concomitant with the promotion of a romanticist critique of industrial modernity, Jung also constructed himself as a rational seeker of knowledge in enlightenment terms. At every point, he stressed that he was not inventing concepts but extrapolating, from the empirical evidence gathered, that which must exist because all the evidence points to its existence. This ambivalence regarding the necessity of the irrational in the human condition yet retaining an essentially enlightenment approach to knowledge, is a particularly poignant aspect of Jung's work. Furthermore, Jung argues that psychological wholeness lies not in the embracing of the irrational but in achieving a balance between the rational and irrational aspects of the human psyche. Jung's work attempts to take account of the seemingly inexplicable intrusion of the irrational into the rationally dominated thinking of European soci-

ety, both collectively and in the thinking and actions of individuals. It is this intrusion that Jung accommodates within his wholistic perception of the psyche. Jung's integration of the irrational unconscious into the totality of the psyche offers the irrational a valid place in the fabric of society. The alternative to this accommodation is a knee-jerk traditionalism, that is, in Jung's terminology, an eruption of the unconscious into the psyche, resulting in madness. To a large extent this need for balance contrasts strongly with the neo-Pagan embracing of the anti-rational and its almost myopic focus on the symbolic as the ultimate expression of human experience and psychic reality.

Within Jung's model, the dominance of the rational, embedded in enlightenment approaches to modernity, is not an expression of autonomy and human potential but is instead symptomatic of a dangerous imbalance in the collective psyche. Jung's theory proposes a modernity no longer unilaterally defined by technology and reason but one that incorporates these into the structure of a psychic struggle for wholeness (Young-Eisendrath, 1991, p. 12; Tacey, 2001, pp. 12-13). Within this context modernity, as progress, is redefined so as to incorporate the spiritual and the rational. Such a search for wholeness would also include the past with its myths and symbols. Jung posits these as the windows into the unconscious. Both facets of existence are essential aspects of the psyche that must be taken into consideration if we are to construct a wholistic search for progress and development.

In application, the Jungian approach to religious and social movements is deeply concerned with the role of symbols and mythology as means of expressing deep unconscious aspects of the human psyche. Jung's approach to symbolism was profoundly influenced by his perception that there are intrinsic commonalities and unifying structures shared by a diverse range of cultures and societies who have little or no apparent common ancestry or heritage. These are evidenced in their common symbols, myths, and civilizational forms and are encountered also in a commonality of dreams, stories, rituals, and religious symbols and practices. It was in his exploration of this phenomena that Jung found further evidence of the development of what he described as the collective unconscious, a structure of images, forms, and symbols held in common by all humanity. As Jung writes,

The collective unconscious is part of the psyche which can be negatively distinguished from a personal unconscious by the fact that it does not, like the latter, owe its existence to personal experience and consequently is not a personal acquisition . . . The concept of the archetype, which is an indispensable correlate of the idea of the collective unconscious, indicates the existence of definite forms in a psyche which seem to be present always and everywhere . . . (Jung, 1980, pp. 42-43)

Accordingly, for cultural symbols to be dynamic they must relate to an unconscious factor that the individuals within that culture or sub-culture have in common. For the symbol to have cultural relevance it must appear to have a functional value. However, from Jung's perspective, this does not contradict the essential nature of a symbol as something unconscious and numinous. Rather a symbol has a functional value only by virtue of the fact that its perceived historical significance and social function is apprehended and given value by virtue of its relevance to the collective unconscious. The more potent the impact of a symbol upon the collective unconscious of a social grouping, the greater the effect that symbol has upon the culture. As Cirlot writes,

The symbolic in no way excludes the historical, since both forms may be seen—from the ideological point of view—as functional aspects of a third: the metaphysical principle, the platonic “idea”; or all three may be seen as reciprocal expressions of one meaning on different levels . . . Consequently the symbolic, being independent of the historical, not only does not exclude it but, on the contrary, tends to root it firmly in reality, because of the parallelism between the collective unconscious and the individual world. And because of the great depth of the hidden roots of all systems of meanings, a further consequence is our tendency to espouse the theory that all symbolist traditions, both Western and oriental, spring from one common source. (Cirlot, 1971, p. xv)

From the perspective of Jungian-based neo-Pagan mythology, all symbolism and ritual serve as a metaphor of psychic development and the meaning and significance of these symbols is defined by their role as representations of the collective unconscious. Psychic development and human contentment cannot

be achieved through will or intention alone. People require symbols and rituals to express realities beyond the scope of conscious thought in order to achieve wholeness. The collective unconscious, the wellspring of intentional and unintentional thought is, by definition, unknowable and cannot be grasped within the confines of conscious rational intent. The mediation of symbols is required to give a person's psychological development meaning beyond that of the purely rational. From this perspective, when a Jungian-oriented neo-Pagan utilizes ritual, it is as a metaphor to describe psychic realities in relation to certain archetypes, within the collective unconscious, that prescribe universal meaning to a person's psychological state. Jung describes the collective unconscious as follows:

There exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents. (Jung, 1975, p. 60)

From the perspective of the neo-Pagan appropriation of Jung, the collective unconscious is a common, shared symbolic heritage to all human beings that gives meaning to experience. Certain shared symbols or archetypes are perceived to represent universals in all human psychic experience. Perhaps the most common example is the concept of *anima* and *animus*, the masculine and feminine components of the human mind, possessed by both men and women. In Jung's analysis there are certain aspects to social and cultural behaviour that can be ascribed to universal masculine and feminine qualities that are distinct from gender. These represent unique universal qualities common to both men and women. In other words, where a culture may have a legend about a knight and princess, from a Jungian perspective this may be interpreted in terms of the relationship between the masculine and feminine components of the psyche on the journey towards wholeness. Crowley illustrates the use of the archetypes of masculine (*animus*) and feminine (*anima*) from a neo-Pagan perspective as the underlying psychological truth of the Gardnerian postulate that divinity is expressed in an equally matched God and Goddess, espousing universal masculine and feminine qualities.

The role of both *anima* and *animus* is to portray those functions which we have not yet brought into consciousness, but the goal of the spiritual quest is to absorb these qualities into our self-image, to own them as ours. For a man the goal is to find in the Goddess those aspects of himself that society has denied him. These qualities are necessary if we are to be creative people, for creativity comes from wholeness. The role of the Goddess was to act as a muse to inspire the man. The man finds the Goddess, the real muse, when he ceases to look for her in women and turns inward to seek her in himself. (Crowley, 1989, p. 169)

However, while the application of Jungian terms such as *animus*, *anima*, *archetype*, and *collective unconscious* imply a direct correlation with Jungian analytical psychology, the use of these terms by Jungian-inspired neo-Pagans can

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be seen as a point of departure from Jungian analytical psychology. This is particularly significant with respect to the neo-Pagan movement's insistence that one can and should consciously create one's own images of divinity and psychological archetype and consciously ascribe them meaning. In his research, Jung attempted to take note of the symbol, its impact upon the culture, and its cultural context. When a symbol is removed from its cultural context its meaning is altered, for meaning is bound up with the symbol's relationship to the collective, the community, the social grouping, and context from which it derives its unconscious meaning. Symbol cannot exist in a cultural vacuum but becomes symbolic because of its cultural context. Consequently, the neo-Pagan penchant for consciously selecting and removing images from their cultural context fundamentally changes the nature and meaning of the symbol. Further, the selec-

tion of the symbols to be removed is based upon a person's own sense of affinity or rightness, which is itself perceived according to a consciously derived set of criteria. Thus, not only is the symbol's content altered in the process of removing it from its cultural and social womb by virtue of deprivation of context, it is further altered by the imposition of another context in that it is transposed into a neo-Pagan culture.

It is one thing to acknowledge that symbols and archetypal images have a deep impact on the human psyche through religious experience. It is a profoundly different thing to believe that one can consciously and arbitrarily create and ascribe meaning to symbols, based upon that which is seen to be suited to consciously designated psychic needs. Jung clearly differentiates between symbols and archetypes embedded in culture and consciously constructed forms designed to have psycho-cultural impact or represent linkages with a constructed representation of the past. According to Jung, consciously constructed images are allegories and signs that give reference to psychological archetypes deeply buried in the unconscious mind. These do not represent the archetypes themselves and are thus not symbolic as such. Allegories and signs have a conscious and known meaning whereas a symbol must always and necessarily be an unknown quantity. If a symbol can be totally explained or rationalised within the confines of the conscious mind, then it ceases to exercise the power of a symbol and becomes an allegoric reference. From Jung's perspective, symbols represent those unquantifiable aspects of the unconscious that have a numinous quality, creating meaning for the individual or collective. These play an illuminating role, revealing hidden aspects of the psyche. However, when a symbol becomes a consciously apprehended and constructed image, it ceases to be a symbol and, although it may masquerade as a symbol, it becomes a representation of the persona. Therefore it ceases to be a union of opposites and becomes a collaborator in the suppression of the shadow. The shadow contains the parts of an individual and society that cannot be acknowledged and, as a consequence, these unconscious contents become projected onto individuals and representations in the external world.

It is important to note that Jung's model arose out of an empirical attempt to chart a phenomenon found within the human psyche, that is the commonality of symbols within divergent cultural settings that had no previous contact.



For Jung, the reality of that commonality was the impetus for his positing the existence of the collective unconscious. Jung is not concerned with the ontological existence or non-existence of the collective unconscious, nor does he concern himself with the question of an external or internal deity. He is far more

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concerned with the experience of the human psyche. Jung's posits his model of the psyche only for the purpose that it enables a better understanding and better way to effectively interact with the human condition. If there is an external numinous reality, the primary interest of Jungian analytical psychology is the extent to which it impacts on human existence and human experience. The actual existence of a divine source or its ultimate numinous or transcendent character is largely irrelevant. As Jung comments,

The idea of God is an absolutely necessary function of an irrational nature, which has nothing to do with the question of God's existence.  
(Jung, 1990, p. 71)

While Jung's works have had a profound effect upon the neo-Pagan movement in terms of providing a theoretical framework in which to function, it is also true that Jung would never have imagined his work becoming the means by which any religious movement might validate its own perception of the numinous. Jung was primarily concerned with exploring the role of the religious function within the human psyche. The process by which the neo-Pagan movement constructs its own symbols, archetypes, and images of divinity is also reflected in the way in which it has adapted the works of Carl Jung. Even as it has utilized Jung's works in ways that it is doubtful Jung would have envisioned or con-

done, it utilizes the symbols and rituals of other religions in ways, places, cultures, and conceptual frameworks quite alien to those in which the symbols, images, and rituals had evolved and previously served. In this sense, the nature of the symbols is fundamentally changed by their usage and makes the supposed symbolic impact of these signs as expressions of unconscious archetypes somewhat problematic. To this end it can be argued that the neo-Pagan appropriation of Jungian theory has become differentiated from its origins in Jungian analytical psychology and has become a unique interpretation of culture and religious experience in its own right.

Alternatively, the neo-Pagan may argue that Jung is not omnipotent and is, like all of us, searching for truth. His ideas are, like the appropriated symbols, imperfect and incomplete, and the property of all humankind, to be appropriated and used as and when they are helpful. The question remains as to how much a system may be adapted and dissected before it may no longer be claimed as validly serving the purposes of its user, before it must be realized that what has emerged is something quite different, not only in the detail but also in intention and spirit. At this point, the systematic framework is no longer the father and mother and the appropriator must recognize they have become, of their own volition, a bastard orphaned child, both compelled and freed to make his or her own way in the world.

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