

The Reality of God – IAJS Discussion Nov/Dec 2008

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John Dourley: Jung, Thomism and others

To all,

It is good to dialogue with what should be called pre-Jungians on the list. In this recent discussion of Aquinas, Barth and Anselm I would agree with thinkers like Jung and Tillich who identify Aquinas and his introduction of Aristotle into Western religious thinking as the beginning of the process that tore the western mind from its roots in the unconscious beginning in the 13th century and continuing into our time.

I have previously posted on Anselm and both Jung's and Tillich's understanding of him. The latter two moderns realize that the truth of Anselm's argument is the unmediated psychological experience of the absolute as an element of humanity's natural experience of the its own depths. Writes Tillich on the ontological argument, "The arguments for the existence of God neither are arguments nor are they proof of the existence of God. They are expression of the question of God which is implicit in human finitude." ST I, p. 205 Tillich goes on to base this question on the human experience of the infinite within the finitude of human consciousness. This experience bases a universal quest for God, understood as an existential questing after the essentially human, "the essential self", which Tillich grounds in the divine in ST III, p. 235.. This idea goes back to Plato. Though Jung had never read Tillich he understood Tillich's point and writes in almost identical language and with an identical meaning, "The ontological argument in neither argument nor proof but merely the psychological demonstration of the fact that there is a class of men for whom a definite ideal has efficacy and reality - a reality that even rivals the world of perception." CW 6, par 81, p. 41. Obviously Jung considered himself a member of "this class of men." However preJungians are not familiar with the idea that the only "proof" for God's existence is the experience of God which Jung elevates to the psychological level in the footsteps of Schleiermacher's 19th century experience of God as the "feeling of absolute dependence", and Tillich's 20th century understanding of the universal experience of God as "ultimate concern". In this Tillich professes continuity with Schleiermacher. Both of these thinkers and Jung reject the reductionism of Barthian fundamentalism which would deny to humanity the experience of divinity as a depth experience of itself. PreJungians have missed a paradigm shift that now would rest the reality of God not on hoary proofs for "God's existence" - discounted in Western philosophy since Kant's first critique - but on humanity's unmediated experience of its native depth and ground. Such experience is the substance of the "religious impulse" foreign to preJungians given their entrapment in mind. On Tillich's and Jung's contribution to the contemporary understanding and appreciation of religion I have recently published with Routledge, Tillich, Jung and the Recovery of Religion. I doubt if the recovery documented there would be helpful to the preJungian in part because even Tillich, the acknowledged greatest of the twentieth century's philosophical theologians, could, in the end, no longer affirm Christianity as "the final revelation" and came to see this position and all similar ones as profoundly provincial. In the end he saw the future of religious studies to rest on the examination of the symbols of all the religions as expression of immanent powers endemic to humanity.

On particulars, Aquinas had little place in living western philosophy until he was forced on the Catholic Church and its theologians by Leo XIII, in 1879, basically as a negative response to German idealism and romanticism and other positions dealing with human experience beyond the solely rational as the basis of humanity's residual sense of divinity. Aquinas' theology and philosophy is attractive to those devoid of such experience, as he himself was till his enlightenment shortly before his death. The Thomistic mind is drawn rather by rational proofs which appeal only to the severed consciousness of the mind uprooted from the unconscious. These proofs are only efficacious in shoring up a non-experiential faith in some particular tradition or in winning debating points at cocktail parties against "atheists". Rome imposed Thomism on the Catholic "philosophical mind?" because Thomism is also suited to ecclesial control due to its objectivity which can be used to base the authority of the Inquisition in possession of

the "objective " Christian doctrine revealed to the mind as something of a bonus after it had exhausted itself proving the existence of God and some of his more sterling qualities, indeed, any quality that did not imply in itself an imperfection. Imposed on the Catholic mind in 1879, in the context of a century long flight from the Enlightenment as it culminated in the French Revolution, Thomism has left little trace today. No serious philosopher working with the ongoing Western process would take the work of Maritain, Gilson, and currently Lonergan and his transcendental Thomism as having much to offer though the latter's indebtedness to Kant gives it some credence. In fact Thomism would be taught only in conservative centers of Catholic indoctrination or in philosophical and theological museums in courses on the history of philosophical and theological thought (hopefully now surpassed).

Yet it was this imposition which effected so deeply the mind of Victor White and much of the still reigning Catholic imagination. The tradition was proven incompatible with Jung's understanding of the psyche over the course of a fifteen year dialogue between the two men. In the end ;Jung affirms that he had seen others come to the crossroads leading to humanity's spiritual future and drew back from it in death. I though I was the only one who suspected that Jung had killed White by so challenging his Thomistic simplicities but my speculation on that matter has since been reinforced by C. Weldon, *The Story of Jung's White Raven*, U of Scranton Press, 2008 p. 233. Actually Jung fought the fight he fought with White twice. The first round was with Martin Buber. Jung exposed Buber's religious poetry as a facade behind which the traditional and wholly transcendent Yaweh continued to lurk. It takes more than capitalizing the archaic version of the second person singular to move into a real relationship with ultimacy. The substance of this paragraph and the preceding paragraph are treated at greater length in "The Jung-White dialogue and why it couldn't work and wont go away", JAP, vol. 52, no. 3, June, 2007, 273-295. Regardless of what side one takes up in the White/Jung dialogue it cannot be denied the Jung felt that Thomism had nothing to contribute to his understanding of the psyche in theory or in practice. This consensus should preside over the current interest in the Jung/White letters.

Barth's sophisticated fundamentalism is no where better expressed than in his manifesto *The Epistle to the Romans*. Here he argues that there are many "religions", i.e., human attempts to reach God analogous to satisfying the belly with food and drink but only one "revelation", God's definitive address to humanity. I will leave it to the reader's imagination to guess what tradition carried this one-sided breakthrough. Barth did go on to write on *The Humanity of God* but it is a limpid qualification of Romans whose religious arrogance could hardly be undone in a lifetime. It is encouraging that Barth and his 19th century predecessor, Kierkegaard, are both now clearly identified as Christian fundamentalists with very little to offer the contemporary other than the reinforcement of Christian fundamentalism. As for Barth's *Church Dogmatics* I would think it to be little more than a sustained profession of faith in the maintenance of Christian dogma which Jung rightly describes as "sacrosanct unintelligibility" and "preposterous nonsense". CW 11, par. 170, p. 109, 110.

I am not in a position to judge the philosophical or theological capacities of first year students at the University of Aberdeen but if their academic stars are Aristotle through Aquinas, Barth's fundamentalism and Anselm's argument taken literally to prove the existence of an objective God then they should be spared Carl Jung and above all stay away from theologians like Paul Tillich skilled in philosophy and imbued with the ability to think out of the profundities of life rather than trumpe the "kerygma" of simple faith.

The best to all.

John Dourley.

Robert Segal: Re: Jung, Thomism and others.

Dear Mr. Dourley,

(a) I was not defending the positions of Anselm, Aquinas, or Barth. I was defending them and other religious thinkers against the insipid characterization of them as part of a dogmatic, uncritical tradition. Your disdain for the three is irrelevant to the issue at hand--unless you are prepared to argue that they are uncritical. Yes, they already believe in their very different versions of Christianity before they begin writing. But they are not simply spouting their convictions. They are giving arguments in defense of their

convictions. And in the cases of at least Anselm and Aquinas, they are offering arguments to nonbelievers, not just to confirmed believers, that God exists.

(b) While you may characterize those who find these figures intellectually imposing as long out of date, they are not dated by anything that Jung ever wrote. Unless you have secured access to Bollingen and have come upon writings by Jung in which he succeeds in refuting the claims made by these or other religious thinkers, Jung's work has no relevance to the claims made by these figures. Since Jung harbors no philosophical ability, I will be surprised if you find anything so impressive. The line you cite from CW against the ontological argument is a psychological interpretation of the argument, not a refutation of it. I hope that Jung, unlike you, did not offer it as a refutation.

(c) Jung is hardly the first person to root religion in experience. Rooting religion in experience is a hoary position in many, perhaps most, religions. Jung himself cites the famous definition of the Lutheran theologian Rudolf Otto.

(d) Jung is not replacing philosophy or theology with psychology. On the contrary, he is explicitly switching topics: not the truth of religion--the concern of philosophers and theologians--but the origin and function of religion are his concern. He writes as a social scientist, not as an up-to-date philosopher or theologian. When he responds with fury to Buber, he does so because Buber, like so many others, accuses him of denying the existence of God rather than of explaining the origin and function of belief in God.

(e) What you tell us of Kant is, shall we say, not unknown to anyone who has ever come upon Kant. But Kant is not Jung. Kant is a philosopher, not a psychologist, and offers his own "proof" of the existence of God--though you need not inform us that Kant's moral argument is not a "proof" in the way that the ontological and cosmological arguments are outright proofs. The point is that Kant's scorn for traditional proofs--part of his scorn for traditional metaphysics--has nothing to do with Jung and is therefore as irrelevant to the issue here as everything else you write. Jung is not giving an explanation of religion based on moral convictions, though others do.

(f) Your grand pronouncement that Aquinas is taken seriously only by benighted Catholics is embarrassing. Aquinas is taken more seriously today by hard-nosed philosophers than he was for perhaps centuries. Perhaps you will offer us your expert judgment on contemporary work on Aquinas by the analytic philosophers Norman Kretzman, late of Cornell, and (my one-time teacher) Victor Preller, late of Princeton.

(g) Jung is hardly the only person to argue against an intellectual explanation of religion. Most modern theories of religion are anti-intellectualist. The granddaddy here is Hume, who, arguing against deists, roots religion in emotion--this back in 1757. Jung is original only in the particular non-intellectualist account he gives. Unlike you, I am not convinced that, even if non-intellectual in origin, religion emanates from the unconscious. There are other non-intellectualist explanations that need to be considered.

(h) Despite your confident dismissal as "pre-Jungian" anyone who takes seriously an intellectualist approach to religion, pre-Jungians seem not merely to be surviving but even to be thriving. The intellectualist approach to religion found classically in E. B. Tylor (PRIMITIVE CULTURE [1871]) has been revived by, among others, David Bidney and Robin Horton. Cognitive psychology of religion, led by Pascal Boyer, is the current craze among scholars of religion. The fact that you yourself give short shrift to an intellectualist approach to religion is not quite decisive. Your leap from pre-Jungians' disagreement with your position to obliviousness to it is breathtaking. If only we pre-Jungians knew the tradition from Schleiermacher on, we'd all be Jungians. So you claim.

(i) Your assessment of the intellectual standing of Paul Tillich is laughable. To paraphrase the famous opening of a now classic work of sociology, no one reads Tillich any more. He has been shown to be an intellectual fraud. If you do not know the literature, let me know. Linking Jung to Tillich does Jung no favors.

Students at Aberdeen, as elsewhere, are not indoctrinated in a single view of religion. They are exposed to an array of approaches. I noted only that my colleagues in divinity are largely Barthians. I am well aware that Barth is considered a modern-day fundamentalist and that the distinction he draws between Christianity and religion stands at the opposite theological end from ecumenism. My point was simply that, right or wrong, Barth was an extraordinary intellectual figure.

Robert

John Dourley: Pre-Jungians

To all.

It would appear that pre-Jungians have to go into a state of intellectual dissociation in their defence of their heroes of "critical" thought, philosophical and theological, in matters religious. They continue the unconsciousness of those who in Jung's terms, "...assiduously overlooked my demonstration of the psychic origin of religious phenomena." CW 12, par. 9, p. 9. Since Jung made this demonstration those who think that the reality and the sense of God originate in extra-psychic domains have been relegated to the realm of the uncritical or pre-critical. Anselm taken literally would be precritical if he thought his experience of an idea greater than which none could be thought had an extra-psychic referent. The same is true of Aquinas, at least till his inaugural vision, after which he wrote nothing. Barth takes the uncritical theological mind to its ultimate in his contention that he is the happy possessor of the one true revelation as distinct from competing religions. In missing the point on Jung's demonstration of the origin of religious experience admirers of the thought of these individuals remain themselves precritical. Nor need new disclosures come from Bollingen. They are there in the Collected Works but may well lay beyond the precritical mind of the pre-Jungian reader. In this context it is difficult to understand how the demonstration of the origin of religious experience and so of the religions themselves in and from the archetypal dimension of the psyche "...has no relevance to the claims made by these figures" and indeed by any theist or holder of any of the varieties of monotheistic theism with the blatant or latent superanturalism these traditions support. Jung has made of them history in the progress of human consciousness. To remain impressed by them and at the same time aware of Jung's position requires an intellectual dissociation or splitting hardly within the boundaries of an integrated critical perspective. Rendered unconscious by one's faith hardly grounds a claim to be "...an extraordinary intellectual figure."

Again the precritical, pre-Jungian would apparently see Jung's location of the ongoing validity of the ontological argument as a refutation of that argument rather than its verification as an archetypal expression of the psyche convincing humanity of the reality of God as the substance of the experience itself. This is what Jung means when he repeatedly related the ontological argument to the consensus gentium, humanity's universal agreement on the existence of God based on its native experience of God. This consensus does not rest on reason operating on its own superficial level, though its rational elaboration can take on many forms. Rather it is a given to consciousness with which consciousness works in the elaboration of the experience. To conceive of this consensus as a fruit of reason is again precritical and pre-Jungian. I was not trying to refute the ontological argument but simply point out the true basis that Jung gives it as universal archetypal experience and so as psychological. The pre-Jungian and pre-critical mind continues to struggle with Jung's validation of the religious statement and dogma by showing its roots in the archetypal.

The need to remain in a mindset isolated from the total human cognitive capacity is again evident in the obsessive need to characterize Jung as a social scientist or as a scientist in the meaning the words convey in contemporary culture. These positions are a remnant of the precritical convictions of a scientism capable of affirming only that which science could affirm. In the end the truncation of scientism reduces human knowledge to what is observable through the senses or their amplification, a position Jung twice explicitly rejects when he rejects the Aristotelian/Thomistic sense bound epistemology in its assertion that there is nothing in the intellect except through the senses (CW 11, par. 785, p 492; par. 908, p. 559) In this constrictive epistemology all knowledge would be sensory in origin and remain unaware of the role of a prior archetypal energies entering into the knowing process especially in the higher levels of human experience such as literature, the arts and religion. To reduce Jung's ontology and epistemology as a condition of making it "scientific" perhaps with the intent of smuggling the remains

into the university would hardly be worth the autopsy that the scientific and rational constituencies in the university would be only too happy to perform.

Again the pre-Jungian mind is given to strange dogmatic categories. Jung is not a philosopher. Kant is. Jung would reply that his psychology has brought the intimations of the unconscious in certain preceding philosophers to full light and in so doing has an ability to identify the psychological basis which enlivens each meaningful philosophy. (CW 9ii, par. 11, p. 6; CW 8, par. 212. p. 102) More Jung argues forcefully with Nietzsche that philosophy should become the handmaiden of psychology as in medieval times philosophy was the handmaiden of theology. Jung here is being sardonic. The idea is that just as mediaeval theology claimed to complete philosophy through the possession of a supernatural revelation so does analytic psychology identify the archetypal energies and concerns in varying philosophies and so illuminate their meaning in a way that evades the philosophers themselves. (CW 8, par. 355, p. 160; par 525, p.276; par 659: 343) As regards Kant Jung argues with credibility that his demonstration of the determination of thought and actions are, in fact, dependent on the structure and dynamics of the psyche. This position is credibly analogous to Kant's contention that he had discovered the structures and dynamics enabling responsible thought and morality in the mind. In his first critique Kant rejects the ontological argument. No idea guarantees the existence of its object. But in the second critique he does contradict himself and throw the ontological argument into its moral version by referring to the "voice that resounds unabatedly in his soul." This is an immediate experience of ought, the moral absolute. Jung understands such experience as numinous and implies that for Kant morality was numinous, just as for Freud sexuality was. But Jung does more. He turns the noumenon, for Kant the reality behind the phenomenal, into the numinous and so provides the mind with experiential access to depths of the human which Kant denied or reduced to the experience of the ought. This move is one that should be appreciated by pre-Jungians as a significant expansion of the total human cognitive capacity beyond the senses, the phenomenal, to a realm which the senses cannot attain but which remains of immense value and human resource since it is the experiential basis of all forms of the ultimately meaningful.

I'm sure that those skilled in analytic philosophy would enjoy playing with Thomism. Both traditions are imprisoned in a reason cut off from the depths of humanity and end up as both pre-critical and pre-Jungian. Hume may have referred to emotion as related to religion but hardly favourably. His major work is to pit representatives of varying arguments for the existence of God against each other to show how empty all were though he was afraid to publish much of his work during his lifetime lest he incur the wrath of religious orthodoxy.

It is also disturbing if Tyler's approach to religion is finding current approval. In a recent article by David Chidester in *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, "Dreaming in the Contact Zone: Zulu Dreams, Visions, and Religion in Nineteenth-Century South Africa", March 2008, Vol. 76, No. 1, pp. 27-53, Tyler is twice referred to as "an imperialist theorist of religion". p. 29, 31. The contact zone refers to the area where British imperial forces were undermining native Zulu culture in processes of colonialization. Zulu dreams responded as seeing this a death, to-day called cultural genocide, or as tortured efforts to accommodate the new culture and its religion with the native culture. Tyler writes of the ethnographer as missioned to "...expose the remains of crude old culture which have passed into harmful superstition and to mark these out for destruction." (Ibid., p. 41.) Tyler's collective imperial unconsciousness was convinced that Zulu religion was a failed attempt by an inferior level of mind at science closely linked to animism. Hence it was the white man's burden to bring these people up to their level. Since these words were written Canada has apologized to its first nations for the atrocities committed against them and Australia has done likewise. It was the intellectualist perception of Tyler and others that was blind to native mythology as an expression of the spirit of a people which had sustained them till the colonial powers got there and could have been respected by a more than "intellectualist" sensitivity. Tyler would have been too unconscious to join in the apology but his current supporters could well apologize for the consequences of his viewpoint from the distance they gained to these consequences. This "intellectualist" perspective probably explains the inability of its holders to understand such conceptions as the "participation mystique" even though the West has seen it enacted at least three times in the latter part of the twentieth century in the war in Vietnam and the two Gulf wars under the "representations collectives" of the American way of life, the New World Order, Globalization, and the war against terrorism (evil usually to be found in the archetypally other). This macabre liturgy is probably to be re-enacted yet once more as the coalition of the unconscious, after its third defeat, now moves into Afghanistan. Removing this threat would require a different and deeper sensitivity than pre-

Jungian "intellectualism" and ego-consciousness can provide especially as it would inform a social science dealing with people.

Finally the discovery of Tillich as a "fraud" at the hands of an unnamed sociologist comes as a surprise. Tillich, Barth and Bultman were the three towering giants of twentieth century Western theology. Any work on its history would confirm this. Its denial would locate its denier beyond contact with twentieth century developments and their roots in the nineteenth century and the medieval period. Some seminaries and theological schools used to ask their students where they stood on the Barth/Tillich debate. Tillich thought that Barth's theology of revelation was akin to throwing stones at people's heads, i.e, dropped into human history from a domain wholly beyond it. Thankfully the theological stoning is mercifully over except in fundamentalist institutions. The American Academy of Religion, the umbrella organization for theologian and religionist in the US and Canada, sponsors two consultancies on Tillich at every annual convention. I do not think there is one on Barth. Tillich's effort to locate the origins of religion in an immanent dimension of humanity as does Jung has prevailed. Indeed recently some speculation was abroad at the AAR meeting that the potential universalism of Tillich's thought was a foundational element in the creation of the Academy itself and in the expansion of its scope. There are Tillich Societies in North America and in Europe (Germany and Geneva). There is a Tillich centre at Laval University in Quebec City. I find it truly amazing that all these people, many highly respected theologians and religionists, as well as these institutions have been so taken in by a fraud. I find it even more amazing that a contemporary scholar could launch the accusation. It raises the question of where the fraud actually is.

The best to all.

John Dourley.

Byron Gaist – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear John Dourley,

I've been away from home, so I haven't been following this thread, it looks interesting though. Now I've just returned to my PC, and would like to offer a single immediate thought on the comments you make about 'pre-Jungians'.

I wonder namely, if the intellectual act of assigning the label 'pre-Jungian' or even 'pre-critical' to persons who believe in an 'extra-psychic referent', may be equivalent to the sort of 'imperialistic insensitivity and unconsciousness' which you say Western anthropologists like Tyler have been accused of. It seems to me impossible to argue against such a position, inasmuch as the act of taking someone out of any debate, by suggesting that they are in some way unconscious for not having 'realized' the exclusively psychological foundation of all spirituality, is another way of saying "it's like that, because we say so".

I realize that, in Jungian terms, 'psychological' does not mean 'nothing but' psychology, but even so, discarding everything other than Jung's approach to religion as being 'pre-Jungian' or merely intellectual, seems to do an injustice even to Jung's own psychology - making of it 'nothing but' Jungian psychology (which, if one takes it seriously, it is surely not). Also, you write that Jung is not a philosopher, but a psychologist, which is I think largely true. But if he commented on philosophers and their work (the same goes for theologians), then surely what he wrote about them is itself also open to philosophical analysis, and stating that it is not, because he is looking at things from a psychological perspective, also seems a bit biased.

If I've misunderstood what you've written, please accept my apologies. I think what you're saying is genuinely interesting. At the same time, I must confess I would like to understand what being Roman Catholic means at all, if you think God is just an experience in the human soul, with no ontological extra-psychic referent other than the archetypes of the collective unconscious?

Best regards

Byron

John Dourley – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear Byron,

Thank you for your incisive comments. Indeed my response is open to being called imperialist in that it takes seriously Jung's claim to have discovered the universal origin of all specific religions in the archetypal psyche. I want to emphasize that not all Jungians, theoreticians or clinicians, take Jung seriously on this very important point. The way to argue against such imperialism is through a credible account of how the religions do arise if not from the common matrix of the archetypal unconscious. The two traditional options in doing this lie in either a fundamentalist supernaturalism. I know because God revealed it to me. Or a shallow naturalism. God protects us from the fear of volcanoes, earthquakes and other possible evils or is a product of the manipulation of the neural pathways, etc. I was being somewhat imperialistic in trying to flush out the hidden supernaturalism in positions that attack or reduce Jung without laying their own presuppositions on the table in not a few cases because they would be embarrassed to do so. If you read me to state that Jung is not a philosopher I have misled you. I was citing the point that I disagree with. I think that Jung is a philosopher. His Answer to Job contains a full blown philosophy of history. It argues that the origin (God) is forced to create human consciousness as the sole power capable of perceiving and then uniting the eternal unresolved antinomy or self-contradiction characteristic of divine life. His antecedents here are Jacob Boehme and Hegel. For Jung the meaning of incarnation then becomes the meaning of history, i.e., the progressive becoming conscious of divinity in humanity in processes mutually redemptive of both. Jung's commentaries on various philosophers are well worth the reading because his thought represents their completion in the sense that he can identify the archetypal impulse that gives them life. Nietzsche said it first in his own way as Jung cites.

Philosophy as an exercise of an uprooted consciousness is over. To a certain extent this is also the case with the monotheisms. Jung's argument is that their truth lies now in their return to the psyche of their origin where humanity can deal with them directly and in a much safer way. As a rampant form of monotheism Catholicism faces the same challenges as do the other variants. There is therefore much more to the interchange between the archetypal and the ego than "...just an experience of the human soul". This statement itself is a form of reductionism that Jung wearied of being made against his thought. In this experience the survival of humanity from its current religious concretions and its future expanded welfare are at stake.

Thank you again for your the acuity of your response.

John Dourley.

David Tacey – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear John, Byron, and all,

That's an interesting response, Byron, and a further interesting post from you, John. The concept of pre-Jungians was coined by Edinger some time ago. He meant roughly what John is saying in these posts.

What this debate indicates to me is that the word "psychological" is hardly adequate for Jung or Jungian work. We seem to need a different word, for explaining what he does. There is so much "more" than the psychological in Jung - there is philosophy, cosmology, theology. I sometimes think our whole field is riddled with terminological confusion. Archetypes are entirely and habitually misused by Jungians. Jung said he was a scientist, but he wasn't. He said he was offering a psychology of religion, but he wasn't. He said his psychology was "analytical", but it wasn't - it's synthetic not analytical. That which is Other than the ego is called the self, instead of the other (as in philosophy). No wonder it has confused so many people! I think the whole field needs a make-over. I have never been happy with any of our key terms, actually.

While agreeing with many of the points raised by John Dourley, in this and other exchanges, I do feel a certain difference in our points of view. It is certainly the case that Jung provides us with a new and

revolutionary approach to the reality of God, and this approach is of spectacular significance to the history of religion and theology. However, I do detect a certain "imperialism" in John's claims that the Jungian approach has somehow rendered all other approaches pre-critical or of lesser significance. Why can't we just say that Jung's approach is important, and leave it at that? Why does it have to invalidate all other or previous approaches? After all, the "psyche" is still an utterly mysterious thing, and to talk about "psyche" in the way Jung does, leaves it open to many and various interpretations. Ultimately, the psyche is mystery. When Jung says we can know God through the psyche, he is certainly not saying God is "merely psychological". In fact, he is very careful to make this point, and he is really saying that the psyche is our point of contact with God, not that God is psychological. We must not confuse the way of knowing, with the reality of God itself. So there is plenty of room left in Jung's work for the "pre-Jungian" notions that God is metaphysical, extra-psyche and so on. We must not let our Jungian enthusiasm turn into another kind of imperialism, I think that's what Byron is saying, and I fully agree.

I actually don't understand, John, why you want to foreclose the issue and say that God cannot possibly be other than psychic. I have to confess that I once felt this way when I was a gung-ho Jungian, but I emerged out of that phase, and now see Jung's work as one approach, alongside many others, each of which have value and meaning. As a Jungian and a Catholic myself, I simply say that Jung's approach is "one way into God". For me, Jung provides a Yes to Thomas Merton's reflection: "There exists some point at which I can meet God in a real and experimental contact with his infinite actuality." – Thomas Merton 1961: 37

On the other point: I fully agree with John that Jung is a philosopher. To not see this is an expression of blindness. While Jung does not square very well with mainstream philosophy, not even with the Kantianism he claims to support, this is no excuse for abolishing his philosophical nature. In other words, he is a distinctive philosopher, an unusual philosopher, perhaps even a sloppy philosopher, but a philosopher nevertheless. He provides a philosophy of religious experience, and has an enormous amount in common with Hegel at this level. Paul Bishop argues in his new two-volume opus that Jung's philosophical work is not academic philosophy, but "romantic philosophy" such as we find in the German romantic tradition. It is the philosophy of reconnection with God as the ground of reality. Again, this might be clumsily performed by Jung, but it is an attempt at philosophy. Tillich and Jung are certainly working on the same project, no doubt about it. I am saving your new book, John, for reading over Christmas.

best wishes, David

Robert Segal – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear Mr. Dourley,

(a) I did not mention previously, in an effort to keep the discussion manageable, that there are those who take Anselm and Aquinas as well as Barth to be attempting NOT to prove the existence of God to nonbelievers or to the undecided but instead to be working from within faith. One example of this approach is Ninian Smart's REASONS AND FAITHS. But Anselm and Aquinas continue to be taken by most scholars in the conventional way: as offering arguments to convince nonbelievers or the undecided to accept the existence of God. Taken this traditional way, Anselm and Aquinas are starting from OTHER THAN the belief in God, the feeling of God, or the experience of God.

(b) I no more now than previously see the relevance of Jung to the philosophy of religion. Jung deals only with the psychology of religion. He deals with the origin and function of religious belief, practice, and experience. Anselm and Aquinas--not, we at least agree, Barth--are giving reasons for belief in God. That is what makes them philosophers. Neither of them considers, or need consider, psychology. But even if they somehow needed to start with what persons are thinking or feeling or experiencing, they would not be appealing to these as JUSTIFICATIONS for belief. The most that Jung, as a psychologist, can accomplish is the "psychologizing" of philosophers--an effort that was attempted fifty or so years ago by philosophers smitten with Freud. But these philosophical Freudians were not claiming to have eliminated justification, as you are doing. If you credit Jung's sketchy psychologizing with having any

necessary bearing on the truth of the arguments, then you are crediting him with the commission of the genetic fallacy.

(c) By your "logic," Jung has made concern with justification out of date. What an amazing claim. How can Jung or anyone else, including philosophers, stamp an expiration date on eternal intellectual issues?

(d) There is someone whom you might have cited: the American analytic philosopher Willard Quine, who developed the notion of "naturalized epistemology." But he was a philosopher, not a psychologist, and he was giving reasons for subjecting traditional philosophical concerns to the discoveries of current psychology, by which he most certainly did not mean Jung.

(e) Since Jung is not the only psychologist of religion, and since he continues to be overshadowed by Freud, I await your arguments for our acceptance of Jung. You tell us that Jung has instituted a permanent revolution in our understanding of ALL aspects of religion, not merely psychological aspects. But you do not tell us why we should accept Jung for even the psychology of religion.

(f) Not only are there many more psychological explanations of religion than Jung's--James', Freud's, existentialists', behaviorists', and cognitivists'--but there are more than psychological explanations of religion. Has Jung managed to refute not only his psychological competitors but also those from other disciplines? If so, how? I hope that you don't continue to say that "Jung has shown" Somehow the world has not been convinced, and Jungian psychology is a minor enterprise on the world scene. Therefore all humanity save for the members of this organization and the other Jungian groups must still be living in the pre-Jungian mist.

(g) Kant's moral argument for the existence of God is not a psychological argument. He is appealing to reason--but practical rather than theoretical reason. Kant's moral argument for the existence of God does not contradict his rejection of traditional, rational metaphysics in the FIRST CRITIQUE. I myself have never come a scholar of Kant who makes this charge. Surely Kant is, on the contrary, trying to find a place for religious belief in the FACE of his arguments against the traditional basis for religious belief. But his basis is not psychology, which, once again, explains rather than justifies.

(h) Hume is not attacking religion by basing it on feeling rather than reason. He is simply explaining it. In his NATURAL HISTORY OF RELIGION he is accounting for religion, not assessing it. He is operating as a social scientist rather than a philosopher. In his DIALOGUES, to which you are referring, he is operating as a philosopher. But as with your reading of Kant, so with your reading of Hume, it is contrary to any of the ones that I, at least, have ever come upon. No one knows through whom Hume is speaking, but even if he is speaking through the skeptic Philo rather than either of the other, believing participants, Philo leaves the question of the existence of God unanswerable. To be consistent, you presumably take the DIALOGUES to be showing that philosophy has no bearing on religious belief--a very different conclusion.

(i) Tylor--his name is not TYLER--had a view of religion and of "primitive" peoples that is the opposite of the one you describe. I happen to know the author of the article you cite, but if he is charging Tylor with using a theory of religion to exterminate Zulu culture, he has misunderstood Tylor. Maybe by IMPERIALIST he means, in postmodern fashion, culturally rather than politically imperialist. In any case Tylor admires "primitive religion," for he sees it as the counterpart to modern science--yes, science. But I cited Tylor only as an example of the rationalist approach to religion that you decry as uncritical. I do not see the connection of a rationalist approach to religion to political imperialism. To connect them is to commit what I have named the functionalist fallacy.

(j) Finally, Tillich. By "fraud" I did not mean that Tillich made things up. I meant two things: that Tillich brought with him to the US ideas that had been around in Germany and were not his own creation, and that Tillich's grandiose theological talk was torn apart decades ago by philosophers, such as Paul Edwards. Edwards did to Tillich what Ayer did to Copleston.

Robert Segal

Steve Myers – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear John,

>>>*The way to argue against such imperialism is through a credible account of how the religions do arise if not from the common matrix of the archetypal unconscious. The two traditional options in doing this lie in either a fundamentalist supernaturalism. I know because God revealed it to me. Or a shallow naturalism.*<<<

Could you please clarify what you mean by "arise", as it seems to me there may be alternative arguments regarding Jung's position not covered by your summary above. The section you quoted from CW12 was in the context of Jung arguing against the "mistaken idea of a *merely* outward imitatio Christi" (my emphasis) and of Jung dismissing their straw-man argument - in which they claimed Jung was arguing that God was "only" psychic. Once it is accepted that religion 'arises' within the psyche, fundamentalism or (super-)naturalism are no longer relevant, as the argument becomes one of whether there is something extra-psychic that causes the god-image to arise intrapsychically. In response to this, I think there are four main positions (?):

A first position is that there is nothing extrapsychic. This is how I currently read your use of the word "arise" (and also your argument in 'revisioning incarnation').

A second is that the question is open or indeterminate, eg:

* Victor White in *God and the Unconscious*: "Jung.. in his published writings, [has not] reached any very definite position" (p. 46)

* Eugene Bianchi in *Jungian Psychology and Religious Experience* quotes Jung to argue that Jung "does not deny a possible referent perceptible in psychic experience. "This is certainly not to say that what we call the unconscious is identical with God or is set up in his place. It is simply the medium from which the religious experience seems to flow. As to what the further cause of such experience may be, the answer to this lies beyond the range of human knowledge. Knowledge of God is a transcendental problem" (See footnote 1)

A third position is that, in Jung's pseudo-Kantism, to speak of the god-image is the same as to speak of a metaphysical god, eg:

* Claire Dunne [*Jung: Wounded Healer of the Soul*] cites a number of Jung's associates as saying he alluded to a transcendental God whenever he spoke of the god-image.

* In *Revelations of Chance*, Roderick Main quotes Wolfgang Giegerich to say that Jung's quasi-empirical terminology is "something of a mask: "it does not make any real difference whether we assert that we are speaking 'only' about the God image in the soul or whether we believe we are speaking about God himself. In either way, we speak about God"" (p. 35)

A fourth position is that there is something beyond the psyche which gives rise to the archetype. Eg

* Ann Ulanov in the *Cambridge Companion to Jung* notes that: "God-images... are the pictures through which we glimpse the Almighty... The unconscious is not itself God, but it is a medium through which we sense God speaks" (p. 319)

* Aniela Jaffe makes a similar point in, I think, *The Myth of Meaning* (I don't have the source to hand, but can look it up when I get home at the weekend)

You are undoubtedly correct to assert that (from the standpoint of Jung's philosophy) religion arises in the psyche. However, this is a tautological argument, and can't therefore be used to determine the ontological reality that may or may not underlie an archetype (or any other apparent reality).

So, with regards the "origin" of the archetypes, am I correct in my representation of your position above, and if so could you comment on your view of the other positions listed. I'd be particularly interested in your view of the apparent shift in Jung's thinking between 1919, when Jung did seem to deny ontological reality, to a different position allowing one of the other three, as expressed in CW8 and a footnote added 30 years later:

ORIGINAL: "I see no proof whatever of the existence of real spirits, and until such proof is forthcoming I must regard this whole territory as an appendix of psychology" [CW8, p. 318]

ADDED FOOTNOTE: "After collecting psychological experiences from many people and many countries for fifty years, I no longer feel as certain as I did in 1919, when I wrote this sentence. To put it bluntly, I doubt whether an exclusively psychological approach can do justice to the phenomena in question. Not only the findings of parapsychology, but my own theoretical reflections, outlined in "On the Nature of the Psyche," have led me to certain postulates which touch on the realm of nuclear physics and the conception of the space-time continuum. This opens up the whole question of the transpsychic reality immediately underlying the psyche."

There are many other writings that seem to reinforce this new position in respect of the god-image - such as:

"The fact that we have an image of the world does not mean that there is only an image and no world. But this is exactly the argument of those who assume that when I speak of the God-image I mean that God does not exist, as He is only an image... The God-image is the expression of an underlying experience of something which I cannot attain to by intellectual means" [LETTERS 2, p. 522]

"there is probably no alternative now but to describe [the archetypes'] nature as "spirit".. If so, the position of the archetype would be located beyond the psychic sphere" [CW8, p. 216]

Steve Myers

Note (1) Bianchi, E., Jungian Psychology and Religious Experience in Carl Jung and Christian Spirituality edited by Robert L. Moore, (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1988), 27 & fn (37) (Sorry, as I'm away from home I can't find the original source for Bianchi's Jung quote at the moment).

John Dourley – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear David,

Thanks for your reply. In a sense I am reluctant to abandon my imperialism because I think that Jung is serious in saying that the archetypal unconscious, and your can use here whatever nomenclature you wish, is the basis of humanity's natural sense of divinity and so of the religions. I am a little heavy on this position because it would force alternative to become as clear in their right as Jung is in his. If the sense of God derives from an Other then something more precise could be said of that Other and our relation to it. Before he dies during his heresy trial Eckhart in a sermon offered a prayer to God to rid him of God. This prayer is to the God who in Tillich's terms is to the "God beyond the God of theism." For Eckhart his God was the ultimate source of human alienation and the relation to him alienating. Eckhart overcame this alienation in a moment of identity with the Godhead in which he reclaimed his natural divinity and returned to the world with it. I think Jung is correct in identifying this God into whom Eckhart's ego was totally absorbed as the furthest reach of the unconscious. No doubt this nothing is expressed in many Gods and religions but Jung's appropriation of Eckhart is correct and is but one instance in which Jung argues that the unconscious transcends the ego infinitely within the psyche but that nothing transcends the psyche. When Jung moves into the question of a God beyond the psyche he reverts to a theistic putting of the question and becomes an agnostic. When he reflects on the mystical and alchemical experience he goes beyond this world into one in which the relation to the Other is to the Other within as the basis of a greatly enhanced relation to the Other without.

But it remains an ongoing question perhaps needing another idiom as long as the clarification does not lose Jung's point.

Gratefully,

John.

John Dourley – Re: Pre-Jungians

To all,

As philosopher Edmonds showed he had little or no knowledge of the meaning and origin of symbol and Tillich's understanding of participation was beyond him. The inability of a consciousness reduced to reason, the precritical mind, hardly makes Tillich a fraud, nor do the ideas he imported from Germany and his Platonism, though it is interesting to note that he later felt this early Christian theology both in Germany and the States was "provincial". Here I too am becoming repetitive. I would only conclude with the remark that difficulties with Chidester's reading of Tylor should be taken up with Prof. Chidester. His reading looked sound to me, rather thoroughly documented, and appearing in an excellent scholarly journal.

To all the very best.

John Dourley.

John Dourley – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear Steve,

Thanks for a very precise and thorough response to my post. It is so detailed that I will go to it point by point.

By arise I mean that I think Jung is consistently arguing that archetypal impact on consciousness is the immediate source or religious experience and so of the religions. On this I think there is widespread agreement among Jungians. You correctly say this leaves open the question as to whether there is a reality beyond the archetypes, i.e., that of God who would create the archetypes and then appear to consciousness through them. On this Jung himself waffles. At time he talks of a divine imprinter who imprints the archetypes on the unconscious psyche. This goes to a potter pot, efficient causality, imagination of a God outside the psyche addressing a creature as creator from beyond. At other times he will relate the archetypes to processes of self-formation through human repetition but this already gets into the a priori nature of the archetypes which themselves would sponsor such repetition. Elsewhere he will confess that this is a chicken and egg problem and that he refuses to decide. "Far be it for me to decide which came first the hen or the egg." CW 17, par 207, p. 117. Though he declines to answer here I think that his work and spirit favour an a priori understanding of the archetype as in dialectical reciprocity with the ego on a wholly intrapsychic basis. This would engage a sophisticated formal or exemplar causality. I am working on a theory of psychic containment which would argue that the unconscious transcends the ego infinitely but that nothing knowable transcends the psyche. I take this to be the meaning of his statement, "Not only does the psyche existed, it is existence itself." and that there is no "Archimedean point" beyond the psyche CW 11, par 18, p. 12. The Archimedean point would be the God who is beyond the psyche though imaged in it.

Let me go to your four points.

1. Yes there is nothing knowable beyond the psyche.
2. Yes, Jung makes many statements like this, often when put upon by theologians of transcendence. I think he would have been better off to desist using substantialist language about "God" as an entity in the cast of personal theism and stuck to his deeper conviction that God is an experience...for instance

the experience behind what he calls faith as experience, "...pistis". Fortunately with Buber and White he came out from behind cover and argued with both that what they called God was their experience of God, that this was psychically generated, and had as its referents the deeper movements of the psyche as when he equates the true imitation of Christ as the experience of Christ in whatever form it may take in the devotee. In this sense Christ could be atman as he remarks in one place. He does at times leave the question undetermined but I think in the larger spirit of his work and especially his later work he would contain the relation of the human to God within that of the ego to the unconscious.

3. Not only Jung's associates but Jung himself will speak of a transcendent God when in humbler mood as a psychologist he confesses that the existence or not of the this objective God is beyond his competence. But in his late writing he has no problem writing, "Individuation is the life in God, as mandala psychology clearly shows." CW 18, par. 1624, p. 719. This statement and many like them hardly point to a metaphysical God imaged in the archetypal psyche. Rather they point to the experience of God within the psyche. More, in keeping with the experiential nature of his psychology I think that humanity in the image of God is not a substantialist statement analogous to the beaver on a Canadian nickel as an image of a real beaver beyond the coin in my pocket. Rather I think that Jung implies that the human images God to the extent one experiences or approximates the potential totality of the psyche which is never exhausted in the lifetime of individual or species. Jung will vest humanity with an anamnesis of this fullness as natural and argue that this anamnesis moves toward an apocastasis, i.e, the realization of the total power of the archetypal unconscious in consciousness. These lines are in his essay on Christ in 9ii. I do not know in what spirit Geigerich describes Jung's empiricism s a mask. If it means that the experience of the archetypal is the basis of the experience of God and the rest is words Would tend to agree.

4. This position goes back to Jung's flirtation with the idea of God as an efficient cause creating first the psyche through whom he then speaks. Frankly why go through an "extra", a medium, when God could speak directly.

I feel that this position falls to Occam's razor in that it posits an unneeded extra medium between God and the ego. Jung removes the need for it in his general affirmation that archetypal power and energy can do everything for and to the ego that God can do. Again this is very evident in his reply to Buber.

I don't know if the argument is so much tautological as cyclical. I think that the total Jung is arguing that the archetypal unconscious creates consciousness to become conscious in it in the form of resolving its antinomies there. In religious and philosophical language God must create consciousness, in an emanational and Hegelian sense, as the only theatre in which God gains self-knowledge. In doing so God is redeemed as is humanity in the unification of the divine opposites in it. It is a Hegelian position and I don't think Hegel was any more tautological than Jung though both may have been. To get out of a charge of tautology one would need information from an Archimedean point beyond the psyche or human consciousness and I think both Jung and Hegel would rule it out as an unneeded sky hook..

Many thanks for bringing up this famous footnote. I too have pondered it. I think that what is going on here is something like this. In collaboration with Pauli, Jung was convinced of the reality of a universal substrate as the source of both efficient causality and what he calls "causal" agency.

Here he has come upon a principle that has analogies with the understanding of Logos in philosophy and theology. The Logos concept understands all intelligible structure in creation to be a universal though differentiated expression of a deeper power, the one, urgrund, etc. It is a power obviously more extensive than what Jung loosely terms here the "personal psyche". The trans-psyche power underlying the psyche no doubt was much more extensive than the personal psyche but was not a power from which the personal psyche was discontinuous. Synchronistic events are sponsored by energies within the psyche not beyond them though these energies obviously surpass the personal. Jung could have been more precise here. Though he came to use and understand the German sense of the term ground it is not in evidence here. As he does in his alchemy he could have argued that the acausal power is the ground of every existent though it is beyond space and time and yet can orchestrate events in space time and nature in the interests of moving the consciousness of an individual into an alignment with the deeper self when there is a serious imbalance in an individual life.

On the citation from the letters I think that what Jung is saying is that the God image expresses something that cannot be captured by reason. It is comparable to saying that the archetype itself though psychoid, i.e., embodied, is unknowable in itself. Saying that reason cannot capture or contain or exhaust the archetypal does not suggest an extra psychic power but only the residual transcendence of the archetype to any of its expressions, a valuable point for any religion or philosophy which claims it does. Again this is Jung's point in your citation from CW 8. At the end of the paragraph he says that both spirit and matter are archetypal and so both transcend the conscious sphere described as psyche and meaning personal psyche. But as transcendence is used in the final sentence of this paragraph it has no reference to an entity which transcends the total psyche. I think his mind on the transcendence of spirit is best expressed when he writes, "The world of gods and spirits is 'nothing but the collective unconscious within me.'" CW 11, par. 857, p. 525. I doubt if Jung's nothing but in this context is self-refuting.

Many thanks for an opportunity to exercise these points once more.

Sincerely,

John.

David Tacey – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear John,

Thank you, this helps to clarify an important point.

I have long felt that theists too easily appropriate Jung, and use him for support. To my mind, there are too many unreconstructed priests and ministers around the world, who think that Jung provides some kind of new, scientific justification for their old-fashioned theistic faith.

In my view, Jung is at least an agnostic (as you say below). But frankly, I would go further, and suggest he is an atheist. I don't find anything in Jung to support the old-fashioned idea of a theistic God.

So when we Jungians are asked by others: "did Jung believe in God?" I think the correct answer should be: No, he did not.

He only changed his tune toward God when approaching God through the exploration of the unconscious and depth psychology. I see nowhere in his work where he affirms belief in a theistic deity. In a sense, Jung was saying: God as a metaphysical object is dead for him, as dead as it was for Nietzsche or for Freud. In this regard, Jung is another modernist, another atheist.

But God as an archetypal subject, is a different matter. The difference between these perspectives is blurred, I think, by those cheerful and happy clergymen who think Jung has provided some wonderful justification for their archaic ideas. In my view, a radical response is required, and something akin to atheism needs to be juxtaposed against the cheerful faith of simple-minded clergy. Jung is not cheerful, and not simple-minded. His God is at least as strange as that of Eckhart, or the late Tillich.

I say this because in my worldly travels, I meet people all the time who are so pleased to know about Jung and to enlist him as a defense of their faith. I met a whole cluster of these people recently. My feeling was that Jung would not want their support, and the first thing he would do would be to destabilise their faith and make it problematical. To understand Jung, one has to go through an atheist phase, as without this, his work does not make any sense. People without this phase in their lives cannot related to him.

best wishes,

David Tacey

Byron Gaist – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear John, all,

Thank you John, for your reply. In your reply to David you write that "I am a little heavy on this position because it would force alternative to become as clear in their right as Jung is in his. If the sense of God derives from an Other then something more precise could be said of that Other and our relation to it." This makes sense to me, since you seem to be suggesting that your position on Jung's treatment of religious experience is purposely expressed in terms of an absolutely intra-psychic origin, in order to elicit well-reasoned responses from those who disagree with this version of it! In this sense, too, this seems a useful and important aspiration.

It's a difficult question. There may be one minor philosophical point that I feel I can contribute to what you write. At the risk of sounding like a 'fundamental supernaturalist' (which I don't feel I am, I'm a pretty troubled guy!), I would put forward the very ordinary point that, in its very nature as a tool for dealing with reality, reason is limited in its ability to grasp or articulate what God is, and how he/she/it operates. This may be part of the reason why mystics like Eckhart have sensed a 'God beyond God', and also why Jung at times acknowledged that the imago dei and its underlying ontological substrate may indeed be two different things.

Christianity is not a philosophical system, but a way in life - and probably other religions too. Christians do not believe that they created God, but the other way around; and therefore perhaps, it's God also who first takes the initiative in approaching us for dialogue, even when we think it is we who start talking. Hence, however useful philosophical and psychological analysis is, and however right you are in calling for an ever-improved articulation in the human logos concerning God, I think the picture cannot be complete without actual experience of liturgy, prayer, in brief spiritual life. I don't want to 'sign off' intellectually by saying this, just to make the point that it may paradoxically be rational to maintain, that only so much can be rationally stated about mysteries, as David Tacey rightly indicates, like the human psyche and its relation to the divine, before an altogether different way of knowing needs to be engaged with. In Christianity, I think the apophatic approach to talking about God is one appropriate response to this dilemma.

You're also correct, I feel, that Jung's very distinctive contribution to theology is his suggestion that " the origin (God) is forced to create human consciousness as the sole power capable of perceiving and then uniting the eternal unresolved antinomy or self- contradiction characteristic of divine life. [...] For Jung the meaning of incarnation then becomes the meaning of history, i.e., the progressive becoming conscious of divinity in humanity in processes mutually redemptive of both." My question would then be, what does the word 'God' mean in this context? Even if we take it to mean strictly and solely "the archetypes of the collective unconscious", and in particular the Self, then what is that?

Best regards,

Byron

Dan Anderson – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear John and all,

To me, positing the psyche as the source of religious experience doesn't advance the ball too far - though I may be missing something here since I am not well versed in theology or philosophy. My observation, John, is that we are arguably in the psyche, not the psyche in us, as you say. I'm not going to pull out my CW to look for quotes, but I believe it's fair to say that Jung's thinking, with time, evolved more to the position of an objective psyche so that we are more in it than it is in us. One example is Jung's dream, late in life, of coming upon a roadside chapel, going in, and seeing a meditating yogi. The yogi raises his head and Jung sees that the yogi's face is his own. He wakes from the dream with the thought that the yogi was meditating HIM, and when the yogi awoke Jung's life would be over.

This illustrates Jung's view of the objective psyche. Another example. Jung in MDR talks of the active imaginations (I assume this is what they were, and not "visions") he had with "Philemon" who taught him much about the psyche's objective nature. Philemon pointed out that no sane man would look at birds flying through a room and think he was responsible for this. In the same way, Philemon pointed out, our thoughts are often not our own; they are phenomena of the objective psyche which fly through our mind like birds through a room. Anyone who has done active imagination for a while can testify to this. You encounter autonomous psychic personalities who you realize are the real actors in our thoughts and emotions. It really was not "us" thinking this or that - or it was less "us" than we originally thought.

Was Jung being mediated by some content in the objective psyche?

Are "our" thoughts really our own, or are they subsisting psychic contents which fly through our minds like birds through a room? Were you to put these questions to Jung, I suspect he would also become agnostic. There is no way of knowing. And this is a necessary, fundamental PSYCHOLOGICAL agnosticism -- a least within the Jungian framework. So by shifting the relevant ground to the psyche you are simply shifting the field of ignorance. To me, it is little different than positing the nature of God "out there." The metaphysics of the psyche are little different than any other metaphysics.

Now, one thing that shifting the inquiry to the psyche DOES accomplish is to create a certain relativism. By founding religious experience on psychic grounds multifarious religious experiences can be accommodated. At first glance, this seems to be a victory for ecumenism. But I would say only at first glance. For now psychological grounds for valuing religions loom. This becomes evident throughout Jung's work, particularly Aion, where Jung judges Christianity in terms of its capacity to carry the psychic feminine and the collective shadow. That's what all those quadratic charts of his are about. Walter Otto -- who, in my opinion, is the most psychologically insightful of the Greek classical scholars -- makes similar critiques of Christianity from the the standpoint of Greek religion. For example, Otto argues that Apollo allowed the Greeks to appreciate pure transcendence better than Christianity, which became entangled with matter with the incarnation of God in Jesus. So, grounding religion in psyche subjects the religions to judgment using psychic measures. This may be a good thing, by the way. But it certainly does seem to raise a whole new set of complicated issues.

Thanks for the good discussion, and best wishes, Dan

Neil Baird – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear Mr Dourley

In my studies of Jung and religion , I have personally underscored much of the attached invited essay circa 1995 Ottawa Canada (sorry for breaking any copyright - I'm a student), however page 76 has never left my mind for past few years...

"Thus , what is both exciting and liberating to some and disturbing to others in Jung's understanding of the natural experience of the divine is that it is wholly intrapsychic, a function of the unconscious... "

Yes this is disturbing and exciting, because we have a history of evidence of people who believe in the divine yet who cannot believe that their belief is a wholly intrapsychic. In contrast we have had Dawkins, Hitchens, Onfray and Eagleton (see The Nation May 28, 2007 Among the Disbelievers) who argue that an "unconscious" mind (does this exist) is yet another form of superstition.

Thanks for your thoughts which I'm still thinking about

all best

neil

John Dourley – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear David,

I agree with so much of what you say.

I think that Jung saw his psychology as an apologist for religion because he thought religion was so important a resource for a full human life. But it is an exploitation of Jung and a misperception of his point on religion to see his psychology as an apology for a particular religion. Jung into Christianity or any other particular religion simply does not go nor reduce. In fact I think his psychology envisions the emergence of a myth which would superseded current religious configurations, at least in the west, with a far deeper and broader religious sense and sympathy.

This is particularly true of Christianity which he diagnosed as presenting its culture with a maimed self figure in the figure of Christ and without the ability to sacralize so much of reality, i.e., the feminine, the material/body, and the demonic. His psychology cries out for an image in which Christ and Hermes, Christ and Satan would embrace and it is nowhere present at the moment.

The question of theism is complex. I think Jung would see personal Gods as personifications of specific archetypal forces, the greater the God the more likely the personification of the self. But I think his psychology does push in matters of divinity beyond personification. The originary power is the Goddess, but she is frequently figured in transpersonal terms as prime matter, the sea, abyss, etc. and in his dialogue with White he sketches the progress of human history through four quaternities from chaos to chaos. So I would agree that in so much as he is not a theist Jung is a non-theist and if you use the dramatic work "atheist" to mean "non-theist" it does describe Jung's position. As I have said in matters of a theistic question about the existence or non-existence of a divine person or personality Jung could and did claim agnosticism. But the question itself is theistic and frames the whole issue poorly. Jung could have said so. He had the resources to do so within his own psychology.

If the question is reframed to ask whether or not humanity is endowed with a sense of God Jung can answer unequivocally, "I do not believe I know." He may have regretted being so candid in this recorded interview but I take his meaning to be that God exists because I have had the experience of God, indeed, according to MDR from his youth. The existence of God thus understood was evident to the youthful Jung as his "secret" but closed to his clerical uncles whose theology denied them the experience as so much theology continues to do to-day. It is as if the theologian must immunize consciousness to the sense of God to make way for saving grace always, as Jung states, imported from without.

So I think it is quite consistent for Jung to be an atheist and yet convinced of the existence of God. In the intelligible logic of his universe there is no contradiction here. Going through a period of "atheism" may just be a period of growing up religiously when the external figures of one's religion are transformed into the living experience of the psyche that creates them. It is somewhat different when depression forces the atheism. More and more Jungians are looking to the dark of such depression as the occasion in which the light of authentic religious experience first shines forth. this is consistent with the experience of the apophatic mystics whom Jung appreciated but did not sufficiently integrate into his psychology. If he had the howls of his being a "woolly minded mystic" would likely have intensified.

All the best.

John

John Dourley – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear Dan and all,

I very much agree with the thrust of you remarks about the "objective psyche." A problem with the phrase is that the objective psyche is subjective and very much alive. In fact it creates consciousness and

history. I would understand the objective psyche to be the realm of the archetypal. The archetypal experience in peculiar patterns of intensity is the origin of religious experience and of the religions. This is particularly true in looking at the experience of the "founders" in religions that can be traced to one. Each of their so called revelations results from the impact of the objective psyche on their conscious ego in the creation of the living Gods understood to be other than they are whose revelation they then receive. In this sense I think the objective psyche is profoundly subjective in terms of the divinities it produces. At least in the West each one of them is an omnipotent subject. When I contend that Jung's psychology is vested with a thorough philosophy and theology of history in terms of the "objective psyche" I would say that the meaning of history and of each individual life in history is to cooperate with the objective psyche in its becoming progressively conscious over time. This is the only meaning Jung gave to "incarnation" which, in later works, he describe as penetration, that is, of consciousness by the unconscious. I always thought Jung's dream of the yogi showed only one side of the process, No doubt the powerful subjectivity of the objective psyche is working in everyone hence it has Jung's face, a human face. But to the extent it does not become possessive this working should not be an either/or around awaking or sleeping. I think the full relationship of the sleeping yogi to Jung would be one in which the only consciousness the yogi could have would be through becoming conscious in Jung's consciousness, here a symbol of individual and historical human consciousness. This is certainly the thrust of Jung's more considered position in his Answer to Job.

I also am in extended agreement with you in the consequences of the position that all religions owe their origin to the impact of archetypal powers on consciousness. I do indeed see this as a relativization and, I would add, humanization of religion and of political faith as originating in the same source and with the same possibility of becoming a form of collective unconsciousness in the communities such faith creates and possesses. More, since the objective unconscious is so subjectively intense I think Jung is saying that it is currently working, at least, in the West to a mythic consciousness which appreciates even as it supersedes the existing and reigning myths, especially of the three monotheisms. It is becoming daily apparent three one and only Gods as they relate to each other through their communities threaten the future of the species. The historical consequences of the objective unconscious as joint sponsor of these three religions as well as their secularized continuations in the "isms" would be to relativize them all through a more encompassing myth which Jung felt was being urged by the unconscious in his day. I think this is what he meant when he said that only a symbolic death (of the current symbol systems) could avert a universal genocide. The symbolic death would be into a myth of greater universal sympathy which could embrace more, if not all., of the energies of the objective psyche which Jung evidently felt current Western religions could not.. In the sense of its survival capacity or humanity's capacity to survive its own implacable religious propensity, I think Jung's position on religion moves the ball considerably forward.

The best to all.

John.

Steve Myers – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear John,

Thank you for your reply, and taking the time to respond to my points in some detail. What you say is helpful and informative, and I can accept much of it. There are, however, a couple of points that I have difficulty with and I would like to concentrate on these.

>>>You correctly say this leaves open the question as to whether there is a reality beyond the archetypes, i.e., that of God who would create the archetypes and then appear to consciousness through them.<<<

I'm not sure if your "i.e." is the same as what I meant by a reality beyond the archetype. I used the expression in a constructivist sense, however, your phrasing hints at an interpretation that is similar to a fifth position that I didn't mention. Geoffrey Raff and Linda Bonnington Vocatura assert, in *Healing the Wounded God*, that they have encountered a separate entity beyond the god-image in their practice:

"active imagination allows us.. to experience a world beyond the psyche.. the "psychoid"... There are spiritual entities and forces that one can experience in the psychoid realm through active imagination... the most important is the ally.. a psychoidal being that is divine in its own right." (p. xiii)

I didn't include this in the list because, imho, it doesn't fit with any of the various interpretations of Jung's philosophy - if we experience something, even if it is through active imagination, then it must be in the psyche. The "ally" can therefore not be a non-psychic being to which the god-image corresponds, it can only be an image, another psychic being.

Rather than your beaver and coin analogy, I'd use the analogy of my son's dog (a "dog" doesn't actually exist outside the psyche) where the common consent argument supports the idea that there is an (unknowable) reality underlying my son's dog-image (ditto for son-image, wife-image, house-image, etc.). I haven't yet brought myself to tell my wife she doesn't actually exist... I think I'll take the pragmatic approach on that one.

>>>To get out of a charge of tautology one would need information from an Archimedean point beyond the psyche or human consciousness and I think both Jung and Hegel would rule it out as an unneeded sky hook.<<<

Just a factual point of contention, here... I'm away from home so can't check, but I thought that, in a couple of places, Jung explicitly rules *in* the *possibility* of an Archimedean point beyond the psyche - one I think is shortly after the CW11 quote you cited, the other in Alchemical Studies or CW17(?).

>>>At the end of the paragraph he says that both spirit and matter are archetypal and so both transcend the conscious sphere described as psyche and meaning personal psyche. But as transcendence is used in the final sentence of this paragraph it has no reference to an entity which transcends the total psyche.<<<

Are you saying that, in the theory of radical containment that you are developing, there is neither matter nor spirit 'beyond the psyche'?

Thanks again for your responses and affording me the opportunity to quiz you.

Steve Myers

Steve Myers – Re: Pre-Jungians

David wrote:

>>>So when we Jungians are asked by others: "did Jung believe in God?" I think the correct answer should be: No, he did not.... His God is at least as strange as that of Eckhart, or the late Tillich.<<<

David, I hope you don't mind me engaging you in an argument that is soon to celebrate its 50th birthday, but doesn't your latter comment suggest that a better answer to the question would be "Yes, he did, but he didn't 'believe' in the way that you did, and his 'God' was different to the one you have?"

(Your chosen answer may be one of expediency, to encourage the atheistic phase you mention - though I'm not convinced one needs to go through full-blown atheism - surely a period of agnosticism would suffice?)

In making my suggestion one answer in the affirmative I'm thinking particularly about the Freeman interview. Freeman's stated aim was to unmask public figures to reveal the private person underneath - most interviews involved close camera work and harsh lighting influenced by a 1950s preoccupation with 'brainwashing techniques' (Jung's interview was one of the few exceptions, recorded in normal lighting at his home). Some of the interviews were described by observers as "torture by television" or "psychoanalysis" because Freeman asked personal, probing questions, sometimes pushing interviewees into a painful corner of self-analysis. For example, Freeman reduced one hard-nosed guest (Gilbert Harding) to tears as he talked about the death of his mother, and some observers felt that Tony

Hancock's decline (ending in suicide) began with the introspection of his Face to Face interview. Hancock's family subsequently asked for his interview to be excluded from the published transcripts.

The efficacy of John Freeman's technique can be seen in Jung's interview in the first few minutes when, on four occasions, he wrong-foots Jung - eliciting replies such as "that's difficult to say" or a long pause. The question about Jung's belief in God was one of these, and in one of the letters he sends afterwards, to The Listener I think, Jung says:

"Mr Freeman in his characteristic manner fired the question.. at me in a somewhat surprising way, so that I was perplexed and had to say the next thing which came into my mind." (Wounded Healer of the Soul, p200)

In Jung's hasty response he resorted to a formulaic phrase that he had used many times before - differentiating belief and knowledge.

My point is that after Freeman, on behalf of "others", ask Jung a question that caught him off guard that he answered in the affirmative. But, in his subsequent correspondence, he didn't retract the "I don't need to believe" but qualified the nature of the god-image that he "knew". Hence, I think a more correct answer would be "Yes" followed by two "buts".

Steve

John Dourley – Re: Pre-Jungians

Thanks for the comment,

I think the contemporary militant atheists have excellent arguments against the more simplistic forms of theism. I am less impressed by their attacks on the unconscious where they do. The unconscious may be a superstition but anyone who ever has a dream has an empirical entrance into it, and Jung argues that the empiricism here discovered bears obvious analogies to the content of the religions.

All the very best.,

John Dourley.

David Tacey – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear Neil, John and all,

Regarding the word "superstitious", I think we have to be very careful with it, and how it is used. It is a power-word, often used as a weapon against things that limited reason fails to understand.

The following was written by a Derridean philosopher, but it could easily have been written by a Jungian scholar or analyst (yet further evidence of the crossover between these discourses):

"All this takes place against the horizon of a general crisis in the idea, or the ideal, of reason steadily forged and established by the West since the Enlightenment. This reason, solemnly proclaimed by our enlightened ancestors, was simply blind to these underlying religious strata, which are emerging today with such exceptional force and energy. Reason never sought to understand what lay behind or beneath these strata in all their richness. It used them as a shadow or a scapegoat on which to establish and constitute itself as sovereign reason. Indeed, it is in the struggle against religion that reason has sought to secure its own legitimacy. Religion has been judged and controlled by the use of a term of opprobrium devised for the purpose by our Roman ancestors: the word superstition.

"The term superstitio was coined by this people of lawyers, jurists and bureaucrats as the (condemned and rejected) dark other face of the Roman religio, which was the only form of religion that they considered legitimate. While religio channelled the precise and scrupulous rituals of the public sphere or

the family, the term superstitio denoted the orientalizing and exotic forms of religion that, especially in the Late Empire, had by this time begun to undermine the purely conventional character of the official religio and give new life and meaning to the popular demand for immediate salvation. Superstitio probably signified survival, a kind of fossil leftover of the ancestral world from before Rome's supremacy. According to Max Weber, this word was a translation of the Greek ekstasis."

Eugenio Trias, "Thinking Religion: the Symbol and the Sacred" in Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo, Religion. Stanford University Press, 1998, pp.95-6.

It is easy to see from this how useful postmodern philosophy is becoming for Jungian psychology: it reveals the modernist and scientific positions (that pronounce against Jungian thought) as the mere 'prejudices' of a rigid form of reason. There is much here to celebrate, to think that philosophy has now come around to our way of seeing things.

David Tacey

David Tacey – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear Steve, John, and all,

Thanks for that, Steve. No, I want to stick to what I said originally. I don't agree with your Yes, followed by two buts.

If others (scholars, general public, aunt or uncle) ask us "Did Jung believe in God?", I feel the most accurate & truthful response is to say No, he did not. For several decades, Jungians have been lying about this matter, and it is time to stop the lie. Mostly, I feel, we have been lying to please the churches, which are so shaken by modernity that they welcome the eccentric Jung as a source of comfort.

You see, Jung's work really is on a very different level to either belief or faith. His work should not be used by people in various religions as some kind of justification for their conventional or traditional faith. I think this is a flagrant misuse of Jung. I think I said recently: I meet far too many clergymen and priests, who see Jung as some kind of balm to their ailing faith tradition. The fact is, Jung is far more radical than they can see or allow. Jung not only saw that old style faith traditions were collapsing - he wanted to give them an extra shove, to topple them over the edge.

It's this Nietzschean level to Jung that has to be restored to him, and he is not the friend of the local vicar or the village parson with a bottle of wine and a conventional faith. He is Dionysian, and we have to give him back his fire, including his destructive fire.

Like John Dourley, my feeling is that Jung must have regretted his response to John Freeman. It has been used, misused, & overused so many times, usually for the wrong reasons. The fact is that Jung felt that the old way to God, through simple conventional faith, was dead, dead, dead. That's what his childhood vision of the cathedral was all about. We can't then suppose that he forgot that vision, and all the struggle and pain it entailed, and return him to the place of simple faith. His fight and struggle with Victor White is important in this context. At the end of that long relationship, Jung knew in his heart that a reconciliation with Victor White was not possible.

Indeed, the struggle with Jung may have been partly responsible for White's death, in my view. It was a fight to the end, and Jung won that battle, and poor old Victor came off second best, not true to his name (!). Jung stuck to his guns, and we are all the richer for it, I think.

What was odd about the Freeman interview, was how weak Freeman was in it. He should have pushed Jung further, - because after Jung said "I know", Freeman quickly returned to his polite British persona and went on to ask other questions that were not relevant. He should have kept it going, but he lacked the courage - so much for his torture by television. Jung scared the shit out of him, clearly.

There are so many Junges in the world today, but the one used to prop up ailing faith traditions and structures is a particularly pernicious one, requiring someone with the rat cunning of a Richard Noll to

blow it out of the water. I'm not sure I have the reptilian nature in me to do it, but perhaps I have. My problem is that my feeling for others often retards my insight, which can be quite brutal.

best wishes, David

Dan Anderson – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear David,

I see where you are going with the Dionysian impulse and the necessity (or perhaps the temptation) to just deliver the final blow and bring down the termite-infested walls of the Church once and for all.

However, I am not so sure. First, simple faith may not be as simple as you portray it. Look at Mother Theresa. She was wracked with doubt. Second, one should always be wary before advocating the destruction of yet another cultural structure, especially a religious one. So, then, what takes its place? I just don't buy that into the idea that we are all better off, isolated, each one an island of personal belief.

Here is where I think Jung goes wrong. He fails to appreciate the importance of social structures. Early, early in his work he does, but then he goes almost entirely down the introverted path. If one wants to talk about archetypes, what about humanity's social nature?

Are we not social beings? Haven't humans in all times and in all places been fundamentally social? Has there ever been a culture that was not? So, what about this archetypal social instinct? Doesn't Jungian psychology, to the extent that it is solely introverted, effectively suppress the social instinct? I find Jung's introverted bias problematic for this reason.

If social interaction is as instinctive as, for example, sex (and I feel pretty certain it is) then it follows that humans must have a social outlet for religious sentiment. It is beyond clear that there are many such outlets now in the West that have nothing to do with the church. Greenpeace, the Sierra Club (in the U.S.), Habitat for Humanity - these are all organizations through which religious feelings can find social expression. And as long as people are CONSCIOUS about this, instead of conflating their religious feelings with the organization's concrete goals, I think this is ok. The virtue of religion is that the expression of religious feeling is completely conscious. There is no mistaking why you are in church on Sunday.

Instinctively, David, I think you know this. Why else darken the door of a church with which one has so many misgivings? It is because the religious function in the soul finds completion in social expression, and this is because of the irretrievably social nature of the human psyche. Every institution has its problems -- look at this list for God's sake! -- but if the alternative is no institution and no social outlet at all, I think we have to think twice.

Best wishes,

Dan

Mark Saban – God-like Self

Dear All

In the light of this interesting debate on Jung and God, I'd like to ask how people make sense of a passage I recently came across in Jung's Zarathustra seminar. Jung is discussing the "On the Despisers of the Body" section of Zarathustra. He establishes to his own satisfaction that Nietzsche overrates the body and identifies it with the self. For Jung both psyche and body are 'functions' of the self, and as such our distinction between them is artificial. Having thus posited the self as ontologically primary he goes on:

"Let us assume for the sake of argument that there is such a thing as the self, that living potentiality which accounts for the existence of our spirit as well as our body - both being essentially the same... Why has the self created the body? I don't know why we are not wind; we might be forms made of air and beyond sex or appetites or digestion and such nuisances, but it is a fact that we have bodies which have been created by the self, so we must assume that the self really means us to live in the body, to live that experiment, live our lives... You see the body is meant to live; it has to be served, and your self has a very particular purpose with it, presumably." (NZS p.403)

My question is, what does Jung mean here when he talks about the self 'creating the body' and having a 'very particular purpose' with it. There seems to be a distinctly god-like ring to this conception of 'self' This kind of talk goes way beyond the teleology of homeostasis, for instance. This world creating 'self' seems perhaps to resemble 'atman' (Jung was very interested in Indian thought at this time) or, within the Western tradition, is he echoing the thought of the German idealists for whom the natural world is an image or symbol of the self rather than an altogether independent existent?

Mark

Roger Brooke – Re: God-like Self

Mark,

I love lines like these! They call for interpretation. It is clearly unhelpful to think of the relations between self, body, and psyche as empirical, as though there is an entity called the self which, like the Prime Mover God, produces the body/psyche in a temporal sequence of events.

The relation Jung is intuiting has to do with ontological relations of possibility. What I mean by that is that Jung is wanting to honor the sense in which human presence is never foundational but always derived, or constituted. Even the baby's little life as a psychosomatic unity is already the occurrence of meaning, an occurrence in which that little life is already found and situated.

I find Heidegger especially helpful in this regard. Being is both ontic, factual being as well as the coming into presence of Being. The ontological occurrence of Being is both presence as being and the mysterious latency that is becoming present. My "Reply" options do not include a textual cross through button, so pretend that I am now writing Being with a line through it.

The assertion that the whole structure of human incarnate and psychological life is already meaningful occurrence needs a quick elaboration. It means that every breath of the "body" or passing phantasy or thought of the "psyche" already participates in the human order of significance. The blood's potassium is there, in the muscles, already indebted to the human world in which the person is muddling along. We cannot understand human life by starting with a course on "brain and behavior," nor with a course on Freud and Jung. Both such courses presuppose the prior advent of that occurrence of Being that is the human world.

If that makes any sense at all I shall be delighted; if not, I promise to take my meds.

Roger.

Steve Myers – Re: Pre-Jungians

David,

Thanks for your reply:

>>>If others (scholars, general public, aunt or uncle) ask us "Did Jung believe in God?", I feel the most accurate & truthful response is to say No, he did not... There are so many Jung's in the world today, but the one used to prop up ailing faith traditions and structures is a particularly pernicious one<<<

I am slightly gobsmacked by this ('gobtapped?'). Your criteria for deciding what is a "correct" answer appears to be whether it achieves your desired effect in the psyche of the questioner.

Whether Jung believed in God is a philosophical question. Whether people should be allowed to live within the myth of a creedal faith is an ethical question. We should separate the two. My answers (at this point in time, subject to change without notice) are "Yes, but, but" and "Yes" (I'm with Edinger in his view that a faith should not be undermined).

If I have misunderstood your answer, then I would happily be corrected, but imho more important than finding the right answer is treating the two as separate questions.

>>>What was odd about the Freeman interview, was how weak Freeman was in it. He should have pushed Jung further - because after Jung said "I know", Freeman quickly returned to his polite British persona and went on to ask other questions that were not relevant. He should have kept it going, but he lacked the courage - so much for his torture by television. Jung scared the shit out of him, clearly.<<<

I will let John Freeman answer this point in his own words:

"that's.. been played so often that I.. realised afterwards that I should have followed that up. I didn't follow it up, not so much because I wanted to change the subject, as because I thought I understood in the context exactly what he was saying, but I realised afterwards that viewers hadn't and I should have followed it up" (Freeman 1989)

Steve

Reference: Freeman, J. (1989), Face to Face with John Freeman, London: BBC Books, p. 19

Robert Segal – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear Warren,

If you or anyone else wants to read an accessible, well-edited anthology of philosophy of religion, see, for example, John Hick, ed., PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION, now in at least its fourth edition. Hick includes Anselm and Aquinas, and they are taken seriously for their rational and empirical arguments for the existence of God.

The most damning, if undeniably crude, attack on Tillich is to be found in Paul Edwards, "Professor Tillich's Confusions," originally in MIND and reprinted in Steven Cahn, ed., PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION (1970). More subtle but also damning attacks on Tillich are to be found in Sidney Hook, ed., RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND TRUTH (1961). By far the most sympathetic assessment is to be found in William Rowe, RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AND GOD (1968). But Rowe still bursts T.'s balloon.

I have never come upon a professional philosopher, of religion or of anything else, who takes Jung seriously as a fellow philosopher. The fact that so many persons on this list take him as a philosopher constitutes the proverbial exception that prove (which is to say confirm) the rule.

Best (in a lost cause),

Robert

Mark Saban – Re: God-like Self

Roger

Thank you so much for your interpretation. It most certainly makes sense to me and I would love to think that Jung would recognise it as approximating to his intended meaning. But one question might be, if this is what Jung meant to say why did he leave himself so open to misinterpretation? For, after all, there

are plenty of Jungians who, if not taking these terms literally, most certainly think that 'self' is indeed a purposive and creative entity. One often hears remarks like, "what do you think psyche wants here?" in a tone very reminiscent of those who might say in similar circumstances "what do you think God wants here?".

One of the problems is the context of Jung's comments. He is critiquing Nietzsche's statements in Zarathustra about the body, such as, "Behind thy thoughts and feelings, my brother, there is a mighty lord, an unknown sage- it is called Self; it dwelleth in thy body, it is thy body." It requires very little interpretation to read Nietzsche's comments on the body as implying something along the lines of your interpretation of Jung's words, which is one reason why Nietzsche is widely seen as the grandfather of existential phenomenology. Jung, however, insists on reading Nietzsche as referring reductively to the biological body: "Nietzsche makes the one sided identification of the self with the body, and of course that is not satisfactory; he endows the body with a creative faculty or a meaningful faculty, which even with a tremendous effort of imagination, cannot be put into it. For we know too well that the body is a biological function, having seen how it behaves in experimental biology." One might have thought that if his own intuitions were so similar Jung might have embraced Nietzsche as an ally?

Mark

John Dourley – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear Steve,

No I am saying that the archetypal basis of matter and spirit are psychoid, that is embodied but unknowable in themselves. I think this is Jung's position on the psychoid. I think your son's dog is very real but when dog's are raised to the status of divinity I think the psyche endows them with a numinosity that lies in their essential truth and not in this or that dog. Indeed the very ability to universalize dog points to an essence that can appear in the empirical dog as it can in any natural reality. This is the valid basis of the sacred and the sacramental. I would not deny the existence of your wife but I would think her existence is related to some important aspect of you anima, hopefully, its divinity.

Sincerely,

John.

John Hill – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear John, dear All,

Thank you for launching this most interesting discussion. I could agree to your assertion concerning the primacy of the psychological experience of God, although I think Robert Segal has a point in distinguishing the psychological origin of religion from a philosophical justification of religion. My philosophical training has become rusty, but one of the definitions of psyche that has always stuck with me is that of psyche in terms of its intentionality. The meaning of psyche, and life itself, is its intending, striving, longing for the Other. The many levels of intentionality -- spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical -- testify to the rich diversity of psychological experiences. I look at the flowers outside of my window and marvel in the way they open their beauty in response to the light and warmth of the sun. Their soul too is intentional. Is not our whole being striving for another?

That is a psychological experience, which can include an erotic embrace or an epistemological discipline as well as an ontological referent. As knowledge increases, we tend to fix the ontological referent, constellating revolt. Once knowledge of God, the self or the soul become fixed or reified, leading to a separation of form and life, psyche must protest, because her very nature, her secret intent risks annihilation.

Sometimes I wonder how much language influences our discussion on these matters. Walter Ong, tracing the shift of language from orality to literacy and the consequent loss of a mother tongue,

understands the scholastic appropriation of Learned Latin as profoundly influencing our way of seeing the world. Learned Latin, heralded the growth of modern science, but also led to detachment, isolation and loss of connectedness to the lived world around us.

“For well over a thousand years it was sex-linked, a language written and spoken only by males, learned outside the home in a tribal setting which was in effect a male puberty rite setting, complete with physical punishment and other kinds of deliberately imposed hardships. It had no direct connection with anyone’s unconscious of the sort that mother tongues, learned in infancy, always have.” (Ong, 1982, p.111).

Perhaps Jung’s attempt to come to terms with the Christian heritage expresses a critique of a rootless language that has lost its connection with the unconscious, the subjective and the biographical.

John Hill

Roger Brooke – Re: God-like Self

Mark,

In those critical comments by Jung about Nietzsche he is clearly at cross purposes with himself. N. is not referring to the anatomical body but the body that, presumably, Jung referred to when he said that body and psyche are one and the same life, or that the body is the materiality of the soul (Visions Seminars, I think, for several great lines like this).

Of course we are on thin ice if we start talking about what Jung "really meant," but it can still be a rhetorically fun exercise. I think Jung left himself open to misinterpretation because he did not have the conceptual language to say what he meant. He was stuck in Cartesian metaphysics in his language although not in his intuitions, and this tension is one of the things that makes reading Jung so exasperating, intriguing, and so on. It is also what makes him open to fundamentalist, empiricist interpretations--interpretations of which he is sometimes guilty.

Roger.

Steve Myers – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear John,

Thank you for your clarification:

>>>the archetypal basis of matter and spirit are psychoid, that is embodied but unknowable in themselves... I think your son's dog is very real but... the very ability to universalize dog points to an essence... This is the valid basis of the sacred and the sacramental.<<<

This has helped me to revision your revisioning, to some extent - I had misunderstood your 'psyche is existence' argument as denying extra-psychic reality. I think this turns the discussion to the question of the relationship between the divine essence and reality. In that case, could you comment on Jung's reference to 'actus purus', in his argument that matter needs to be included in the Godhead, as it seems to suggest divinity and reality are one and the same:

"God is pure reality, the 'actus purus' itself... there are only two possibilities: either the material world is real, in which case it is an intrinsic part of the divine 'actus purus', or it is unreal, a mere illusion, because outside the divine reality"

Also, could you clarify if, by saying that the archetypal basis of matter and spirit is psychoid, you are saying that, although there may be a phylogenetic transpersonal reality underlying the god-image, there is no ontological transcendent reality underlying it?

And, do you see any relationship between psyche, spirit and the 96% of the universe's energy that the psyche has as yet only been able to infer and not apprehend (matter is only 4% of the universe's energy)?

Steve

Byron Gaist – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear John,

You write: *"when dog's are raised to the status of divinity I think the psyche endows them with a numinosity that lies in their essential truth and not in this or that dog. Indeed the very ability to universalize dog points to an essence that can appear in the empirical dog as it can in any natural reality. This is the valid basis of the sacred and the sacramental."*

What I understand this as saying, is that (a) psyche endows the dog with numinosity, and (b) the dog can be endowed with numinosity like this, because it has an inherent numinous essence which can become apparent to the psyche. But which came first, the numinosity in the psyche or the numinosity of the dog? You seem to be saying, 'neither, this issue cannot be resolved, everything is psychoid'. What then necessitates the acceptance of such a claim? Why is it any more rational, empirically sound, conscious or critically astute to say this is how things are, rather than to believe in the claims of a revealed religion?

Best regards,

Byron

Steve Myers – Re: God-like Self

Dear Roger,

I'm not wanting to cut across your discussion with Mark about Nietzsche (please continue that interesting discussion), but could I take the following comment in a different direction and ask you a couple of questions which, I suspect, you may be well placed to address (with apologies for the length of introduction to my questions):

>>>*He was stuck in Cartesian metaphysics in his language although not in his intuitions*<<<

For me, one of the practical benefits (ie not merely rhetorical) of trying to work out what Jung "really meant" is that it can help to find out and evaluate what lay at the other end of his intuitions. In order to do that one has first to grasp an understanding of his philosophy and, I must confess, at the moment that's an area where I'm all at sea (pun intended - but I'm not yet sure whether being all at sea is a good thing, bad thing, both or neither :-)).

For example, Marilyn Nagy describes Jung as a subjectivist, but Polly Young-Eisendrath describes him as a constructivist; Roderick Main suggests Jung misunderstood Kant but Edward Edinger says "Jung's epistemology obviously corresponds to Kant's epistemology"; Marilyn Nagy described Jung as a "philosophical amateur", but Renos Papadopoulos described him as someone of great epistemological sensitivity; and Jung seems to contradict himself by claiming to be both Kantian and an empiricist (though, as Nagy pointed out, this might be because of the different variations of Kantianism being promoted at the beginning of the 20th century). However, what makes most sense to me, at the moment at least, is William Kotsch's article (Kotsch 2000) where he sticks the label "psychic realism" on Jung's philosophy, thereby recognising it as his own unique standpoint.

With my next point I'm in great danger of attracting a reductive label (especially as I'm also about to argue - if I can get away with it :-)) - that, in this one respect at least, Jung was also reductive). These types of contentions arose in Jung's discussion with Buber and his reaction (expressed to someone else) was one of bemusement at the controversy:

"My empirical standpoint is so disappointingly simple that it needs only an average intelligence and a bit of common sense to understand it, but it needs an uncommon amount of prejudice or even ill-will to misunderstand it, as it seems to me." (Letters 2, 573)

An "uncommon amount of prejudice" could be another (pejorative) way of describing a world-to-mind direction of fit. My question, therefore, is whether it might be that Jung's standpoint was so simple, as he claimed, that our misunderstanding of it is due to the superimposition of more sophisticated philosophical frameworks?

To illustrate the question with an example that relates back directly to our discussion of God, Jung said that:

"all knowledge is the result of imposing some kind of order upon the reactions of the psychic system.. an order which reflects the behaviour of a metaphysical reality, of that which is in itself real" [CW8, p. 171]

I'd like to express this in mathematical language, as that brings a clarity that is difficult to achieve with words. The maths here is very simple - expressing something as a function (see note below if explanation of the format is needed):

image = f(psyche, reality)

Jung's declared interest was in image and psyche, but not reality. Work such as that of Renos Papadopolous', that focuses on the archetypal basis of Jung's epistemology, examines the role the psyche plays in the above equation. But for the moment I just want to stick with the helicopter view, as I wonder if that is the simplicity that Jung felt was being lost in the interpretations of his work. That is, I wonder if Jung's claim of being Kantian is based 'simply' on the fact that one can substitute the terms phenomena and noumena into the above equation (because the reality is unknowable):

phenomenon = f(psyche, noumenon)

Jung illustrated this principle using colour and wavelength - I'm sure you are very familiar with it, but here is an actual text anyway:

"Whatever I perceive.. is a representation or image, a psychic entity caused, as I rightly or wrongly assume, by a corresponding "real" object... what we call "colours" are really wavelengths. The difference between image and real object shows that the psyche... alters it by adding or excluding certain details. The image therefore is not entirely caused by the object, it is also influenced by [the psyche]. We cannot remove colour perception [LETTERS 2, 521]

That is, the equation for colour is:

Colour = f(psyche, wavelength)

NB: This is not constructivism, because the reality/noumenon can be very trivial - eg: the psychoidal basis for the memory of a dog (using psychoidal in Bleuler's original sense) can give rise to an image of a dog that doesn't actually exist but nevertheless seems very real. This is not subjectivism, either, because there is always the involvement of an objective noumenon in the equation and the search for truth involves achieving a degree of homogeneity between the image and reality.

So, in true mathematical style, one can substitute variables and get different results, such as:

My son's dog:

|--> living-dog-image = f(my-psyche, dog's-underlying-reality)

My wife:

|--> my-view-of-wife = f(my-psyche, wife-underlying-reality)

NB: As John has pointed out, a significant component of "psyche" in this equation is my anima

In the above equations, the underlying reality changes but the psyche remains the same. However, there can also be several equations for God but, as God is transcendent, in these equations the underlying reality is always the same but the psyche varies

Views of God:

jung-god-image = f(jung-psyche, God)

my-god-image = f(my-psyche, God)

Western-Christian-god-image = f(western-Christian-psyche, God)

So, in Jung's correspondence after the Freeman interview, he was simply saying that his god-image is not the same as the Western Christian god-image because his psyche is not the same as the Western Christian psyche. But, due to his non-subjectivism, he also argue that fractures in the Western Christian *psyche* were illustrated by the problematic features in the *image* of god in Western Christianity (absence of evil, the feminine, matter, quarternityness, etc.). However, his insistence on the difference of his and western-christian god-images did not deny the underlying reality of God, but merely reinforced the unavoidable relativity of all god-images (in fact, all images) within psychic realism.

I'm very aware that the above argument has a slight (!:-) Cartesian influence so, my second question is whether, in this particular area, Jung was wanting to be reductive and hold people back to a Cartesian way of thought because, despite the sophistication of his psychological theories, his philosophy was really "so disappointingly simple".

Steve

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Reference

Kotsch, W.E. (2000) Jung's mediatory science as a psychology beyond objectivism, Journal of Analytical Psychology, Volume 45, Issue 2 (pp. 217-244)

(I don't have the references for other texts to hand, but they can be found and provided on request)

Maths note: $y = f(a,b)$ is a notation for any mathematical function. If the function is "multiplication", then $12=f(3,4)$ - more commonly written as $3 \times 4 = 12$. If the function is addition then it would be written as $sum=f(number, number)$, eg: $7=f(3,4)$

Kathryn Madden – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear John (Hill, but also Dourley and all),

I want to express appreciation for your recent comments which, to me, are foundational, clear, insightful, and grounded. It is refreshing to hear a voice that does not need to become argumentative, although I do also find a good debate to have an element of feisty argument as well.

In reading your comments, I am being so forward as to say that I hope that you will read my new book, Dark Light of the Soul, which addresses many of the same issues currently being talked about online. When I was in the initial stages of writing this text, I was going to go the direction of philosophy. I had been reading a Russian philosopher named Berdyaev. Something wasn't coming together in the writing, and I realized that it was because most of what Berdyaev was writing about was drawn from Jacob Boehme and others. So, I went to Jacob Boehme, whom Jung mentions quite a bit in CW and found a better way to proceed with my work. I combined Boehme and Jung with Neumann on the notion of the psychoid, the self, the notion of soul, and the idea of seeing through to our original ground when we are

still in the mother's womb, at the same time we are becoming an incarnate entity. There is something so hauntingly beautiful about that notion. Then, if the mother replicates the archetypal resonances of the self, development proceeds well (in a very OD rudimentary nutshell summary).

But what I liked best about Boehme's thinking is the notion of the ungrund, or un-ground, a nothingness out of which proceeds a something-ness. In Boehme's terms, this would be where good and evil become parallel streams, both having their on ontology in a paradoxical way, the idea being that even nothingness is ontological (at least as we perceive it, since to perceive it, or to participate in it, we have attributed it being on one level. And I also think that Jung and Boehme would say that the nothingness has its own paradoxical Being as well).

I compared Boehme's idea of the Ungrund with Jung's experience with the Pleroma in Septem Sermones and found there to be many comparisons on an experiential and phenomenological level to what Boehme was describing--the Ungrund for Jung being the unconscious. Everything unfolds from there, as the growing ego makes conscious the unconscious. Here is where what you said so eloquently about reification is so valuable a thought. Because Being is ever-flowing, so to speak--just to give it an image--if we get stuck in our images, fixed, rigid, as you say--whether this be in psychology, philosophy, theology, etc.--we are basically not participating with the "constant flow."

(I agree by the way with those who say that psychology, philosophy, and theology, are best kept in their individual aqueducts. I always know how difficult that is to do when teaching or writing about this material and certainly have myself used terms like "Other" when perhaps self or Self might have been more appropriate.)

The main thing I derive from your words is at the core--that we seek otherness, another, in various forms, be it a person, learning, a more immediate participation with what we apprehend as Being, etc. This is what the essence of all the fields we all are talking about: theology calls it God; philosophy, the love of wisdom, or Sophia and so on. It is one thing to debate the language and semantics of these fields of endeavor and another to just try to apprehend Being itself. This is what I think all these fields attempt, however imperfectly. To try to apprehend Being is to attempt to know a bit about the unknown, to experience it, glimpse something that will endow us with meaning, make us into more of an individual, connect us to something alive. And, as you mention, when something gets in the way of this--whether we get blocked, fixed, locked into certainty, imperious--then we lose the connection.

What I appreciate so much about this discussion, is that all of us are trying to connect with that something.

Kathryn Madden

Roger Brooke – Re: God-like Self

Steve,

These conversations are not private and you are welcome to chime in whenever the spirit moves you.

Your thoughtful response requires more from me than I can manage at the moment. In a general way, I think that part of what makes reading Jung so enjoyable is precisely that he crossed cultural and epistemological lines all the time, unaware that he was doing so. He was not writing within a tradition--he was making it up as he went along-- so it is up to us to read him creatively, linking him to various traditions that seem useful. For us readers, it is our own intellectual traditions that help us orient ourselves to him. (If we think we do not have a tradition and so take Jung at his word then we are in the same composite muddle as he is:))

I think it is helpful to take him seriously when he claims to be a phenomenologist. What he means by that is set out most clearly in Psychology and Religion (the Terry Lectures). But his use of phenomenology was fairly uninformed, and it was certainly inconsistent. Nevertheless, I believe it is crucial to understand what he was getting at. It is also right there that his problems with Buber and others make sense.

Take care,

Roger.

David Tacey – Re: God-like Self

Steve and all,

I take it that Roger was not particularly targeting Jung with this statement, about Cartesian logic and philosophy. I read Roger in this way: since Descartes, almost all Western science has been stuck in Cartesian logic and categories, so it is not a particular curse which is specific to Jung. If this is what Roger meant, I fully agree. In fact, in a recent essay on Jung and science, I said exactly this: that his intuitions are broad and operate in a larger paradigm, but his language and terms are Cartesian, - and this may account for a lot of the clunk-clunk that goes on in Jungian thought.

Nagy is right: Jung is a subjectivist. Young-Eisendrath is also partly correct, insofar as archetypal theory presupposes that every archetypal image is "constructed" according to history, culture, environment, society - I would say he is a mild constructivist, but far from the constructivism recognised by post-structuralist theory in the university. Next to that system of thought, Jung still appears as an essentialist. In that sense, I feel that Young- Eisendrath is exaggerating things, and trying to force Jung to be more constructivist and cool than he is, to help along his reputation in the academy - and to help along hers, no doubt. We create the Jung that we want to see, as a mirror image of ourselves.

I agree with Main that Jung misunderstood Kant - that is the accepted view now. I don't think Edinger thought this through, enough. I tend to think that Edinger often took Jung at his word, as a believing disciple, and did not always critically evaluate Jung's claims, as a critical reader. Nagy is right: Jung is a philosophical amateur, but he is still a philosopher nonetheless, even if a bad one. He does not have to be an academic philosopher in a top university to be counted as a philosopher. He is almost a backyard philosopher, in the same way that I am a backyard physicist.

I don't like the term "psychic realism" - it begs too many questions - what is psyche? what is real for the psyche? I think Nagy's "subjectivist" is the term we need. But one could also style Jung as a Neoplatonist - there is much in his work that would fit this description, philosophically speaking. All his work on anima mundi, for instance, is Neoplatonist.

On your other point - Jung claimed he was an empiricist, over and over again. Uncritical Jungians say Yes, indeed he was, and they have been saying this for generations. But critical readers and post-Jungians see that Jung's claim does not quite wash. While there is an empirical element in his work, and the spark is often empiricist, the main action of his hermeneutics and interpretation is philosophical and theological - in other words, he is one part empiricist, and three parts philosopher-theologian. This is the anomaly about Jung, that he could not even see this himself, is very worrying about his current and future reputation. He was blind to his own work and method, and that is rather sad about him. He kept saying, "Just look at the facts, they speak for themselves; why can't you see the facts?" He said this so often, and yet it just had the reverse effect on his critics, because he was interpreting the facts all the time, and not honest enough about this, in terms of his own methodology. To critics, it looked like he was "cooking the books" at every turn. It is the classic blind spot in Jungian psychology.

David Tacey

John Dourley – Re: Pre-Jungians

Brian,

In this citation I am getting at the implications of Jung's understanding of the unus mundus as the ground of all empirical being CW 14.. Everything inheres in an originary power which is at the same time the origin of the sense of the sacred. This means that the sacred can appear through anything. How and through whom it appears would be contingent on what side of the individual psyche needs the

experience of the numinous and how the agency of the unus mundus is active in individual circumstance. The question would be like asking how synchronicity occurs and in what manner in a given life. It is thinking like this that enables Tillich to argue that the sacred can and has appeared through all levels of creation, e.g., through animals who talk as did Baalim's ass. I think the final argument is base on the experience of the sacred itself as inevitable in human consciousness.

Sincerely,

John

Byron Gaist – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear John, all,

Thank you for your response, John. In a sense, you are confirming what I was implying by asking you how the 'psychoid' differs from, say the notion of the Uncreated in Christian theology, the non-Self in Buddhism etc.. By what criteria are we to accept Jung's language and imagery as being somehow more empirical (fundamental?)/ accurate/ evolved than the language and imagery of any revealed religion? Because it's more modern? Because it can replace all the other ways of talking with terminology of its own?

Why should talk about archetypes, the objective psyche, the Self, the unus mundus etc. be priveleged over talk of saints, angels, God, the creation? What advantages does the new myth have over the old one (even if we agree to read Christianity at the level of myth, despite it being so much more - and yes, I know 'myth' doesn't mean 'false')? If we are being told that a more inclusive image of God is being offered, one which accounts for and gives due honour to evil, the feminine and the body, then I can equally say: Satan, the Theotokos and Incarnation. Why are your terms better than mine? Am I supposed to feel overwhelmed with gratitude because I am told that Christ should embrace with Satan? Satan in Christian theology is ontologically good, and God created him for a reason; his repentance would be welcomed in heaven, but Satan of his own will chooses to turn away persistently (a will given to him by God, Who knew perfectly well he would misuse it, and no, I don't see this as incriminating a God Who is love and desires the freedom of his rational creatures) . The 'hug', in human terms, is being offered to the devil, but he doesn't want it. What he wants, is the destruction and fall of man and the whole creation.

Of course, all this demonstrates my pre-Jungian lack of conscious insight, my being stuck in an unconscious medieval world-view, immersed in a collective dream - possessed, even, by fundamentalism. That's OK. I can still appreciate Jung and analytical psychology, even your own writings John, for what these can offer modern man in his existential search for meaning. And I don't even feel the need to change the message to make it suit my own religious point of view, which I agree would be a dishonest and futile exercise. I don't think we're going to agree, but I want to thank you for stimulating this debate. I do think there is a way forward, but the rest of my meaning here may be subsumed under Ps 34:8, and as I said in a previous post that's not the kind of knowledge that can be conveyed over the internet.

BTW, my name is Byron, not Brian.

Best regards,

Byron

Steve Myers – Re: God-like Self

David,

Thanks for your helpful message of orientation for me on this philosophical sea. I can take 'on board' much that you say - and particularly interesting is the proportion you assign between Jung being

empiricist and philosopher-theologian, which I'm going to have to think about. There is, however, one particular flag on your mast that I still have a little difficulty with:

>Nagy is right: Jung is a subjectivist.

The problem may be due to my own philosophical amateurishness but, whilst there is much about Jung's approach that fits the label of subjectivism - eg: that he thought one should always recognise the limitations of one's own worldview - there are also some key characteristics that don't. Whilst I realise this depends on one's subjective (-:-) interpretation of subjectivism (Nagy concludes by putting Jung's position into the category of metaphysical idealism (p. 265)), examples include the transcendent aspects of synchronicity, the links with physics, and his subjectivity having a Galilean flavour that assumes an underlying, objective metaphysical reality, eg:

"Nobody has ever seen an archetype, and nobody has ever seen an atom either... [But] one must..assume that the.. archetype rest[s] on something actual even though unknowable, just as the atom rests on certain unknowable qualities of matter" (Letters 2, p. 54)

My initial reading of Roger Brooke's work is that positioning Jung as a (not-very-good) phenomenologist may fit better than subjectivism. However, I'll have to read his book first (just ordered).

Steve

Mark Saban – Re: God-like Self

David

I agree that Jung finds difficulty in expressing his radical intuitions because of the Cartesian straitjacket (and I think that many post-Jungians have inherited the straitjacket and lost the intuitions).

However, although you are quite right in stating that the accepted view on Jung's Kantianism is that he either misunderstood Kant's philosophy (de Voogd, Bishop) or wilfully misappropriated Kant's name (Shamdasani), I think this view stems from too limited a perspective on Jung's relationship to Kant, and particularly his epistemology. The standard argument is that Jung tried to map archetype/archetypal image onto noumena/phenomena and that this shows a misunderstanding of Kant. Though this does indeed show a misunderstanding on this particular point, it seems to me that Jung remains faithful to Kant's epistemology in the broader sense. Kant's 'Copernican revolution' was intended to perform the apparently impossible reconciliation between the claims of Newtonian science to objective truth and the sceptical empiricism of Hume which appeared to undermine them. In order to dissolve this dichotomy, Kant theorised that it is naive to posit a direct correspondence between passive mind and world, and instead he suggested that our experience of the world is actively digested and structured by the mind itself according to a priori 'categories' such as space, time and causality. In the wake of Kant's critique, it was to be analysis of how the mind structures human experience that would become the primary project for philosophy, rather than the traditional object of metaphysics: the fundamental nature of the world itself. About this, according to Kant, nothing could be said with certainty.

It is not difficult to see how attractive such an epistemology might be to Jung, keen to establish the primacy of the psyche as the medium of knowledge, and therefore psychology as the science of sciences. If Kant is saying that all our experience is moulded by the psyche then psychology becomes a crucial discipline in any attempt to understand human life. Kant's fundamental insight that as humans we all share in unconsciously shaping our experience of the world in common ways would also have a particular appeal for the psychologist of archetypes and the collective unconscious. The first version of Kant's critique even posited imagination as the faculty which autonomously synthesises sensory impressions with rational understanding – i.e. *Esse in anima*.

However, it is precisely Jung's genuine Kantianism which causes him problems when he tries to move psyche out beyond the subjectivist box that it restricts him to. If anything it exacerbates the tendency toward solipsism implicit in Cartesian dualism.

Anyway, my point is that, where it matters, Jung is a Kantian.

Mark

John Dourley – The other

Dear John Hill,

Many thanks for your lengthy and insightful reflections on the other. I think your concluding remarks about the currently rootless is well taken though I suspect the rootlessness is deeper than linguistic.. A theme in my writing on Jung has been that of rerooting, namely the rerooting of consciousness in psychic depths from which consciousness has been uprooted and then grown insensitive to its uprootedness. I suspect that this is this uprootedness to which Heidegger refers when he states that contemporary culture has forgotten, has forgotten that it has forgotten and awaits a new revelation of being. I take Heidegger to be close to Jung's meaning when he talks of modern consciousness as being a "will o'the wisp" now longing for the "deep wells of being" and through them a relation of communion to "life in all its forms." CW 5, par. 299, p. 205.

Jung's remarks here are about the relation to the other which certainly is endemic to discussion on the psyche and to philosophical discussion. In the Christian tradition Augustine was to write "long have I loved thee, late have I found thee, wisdom divine". Within the context of the Confessions Augustine goes through his attractions to the other beyond himself, and to superficial attractions to the other within himself, finally to locate the deepest relation to the Other within himself as the primary relation and as the precondition to relating well to the Other beyond himself.

In the thirteenth century in his work, "The Mind's Journey to God" Bonaventure does much the same arguing how God is more dimly perceptible as shadow, vestige, etc. beyond himself but most intensely as image and similitude within himself. Finally he uses the symbol of the crucifixion of the Logos as the ultimate entry into relationship with the inner Other. In the mediaeval mind the crucifixion of Logos would be the crucifixion of mind both human and divine. The ultimate entry into the divine as the Other within is to an inner Other wholly beyond mind.

Bernard McGinn and other scholars are revivifying the apophatic mystical tradition and demonstrating how the Beguines and Eckhart in the 13th and 14th centuries, both cited in the CW, understood their experience to culminate, not in a relation to the Other beyond whose otherness is sustained in the relation, but in a moment of identity with the internal Other. Jung describes this experience well in the total absorption of the ego by the unconscious in mutual identity. "...God disappears as an object and dwindles into a subject which is no longer distinguishable from the ego." in which the "...original state of identity with God is re-established..." CW 6, pars. 430, 431, p. 255.

In his response to Buber in CW 18 Jung makes it very clear that the relation to the Other is primarily to the Other within. This is not to deny the importance to the external other. It is to affirm that for Jung contemporary culture had been largely divested of an inner relation to "...the One who dwells within him (enlightened humanity), whose form has no knowable boundaries, who encompasses him on all sides, fathomless as the abysses of the earth and vast as the sky." CW 11, par 758, p. 470. The text is not incidental to the intentional thrust of Jung's understanding of the psyche. It clearly locates the Other, the One, as within, the ground of a profound interiority as the basis of the relation to sky, earth and the external other beyond. For Jung the restoration of a relation to the inner One is the precondition of a relation of communion to the external world and much of his psychology works toward it. Without it society witnesses to its current spiritual sterility. Part of this spiritual poverty had been worked by specifically theological conceptions of an absolute divine transcendence. Part of it had been worked by a philosophy which reduced the human cognitive potential to reason or mind. Part of it had been worked by a science which had first to fight for its due autonomy against heteronomous religion and, once won, put the fostering of human interiority on the periphery of concern if it did not effectively deny its importance. I think the above passages in Jung refer both to his diagnosis and healing of the current situation in the recovery of the inner Other in whatever form or tradition such recovery might take place.. More, these passages bring together a philosophical and theological perspective in a harmony that

refuses the too common severance of these human capacities and inevitabilities. This integration is specific to Jung's discourse and genius and itself a significant contribution to modernity.

All the very best, John.

Sincerely,

John Dourley.

John Dourley – Actus Purus

Dear Steve,

I think the passage you cite in which Jung uses the mediaeval theological term "actus purus" refers to his conviction that everything that is visible in the world has its ground in God, or effectively in the archetypal depth of the originary psyche. In this matter he is engaged in argumentation against traditional Christianity, and I would suspect against the monotheisms themselves, that would sanctify spirit, male, Christ and good and in so doing excluded their natural polarities body/matter, female, Satan and evil as perceptibly real but beyond divine origin and so divested of the sacred. In his movement to a quaternarian cosmology he argues that a pathologically one-sided Christian Spirit must now bow to a more encompassing Spirit which would work the integration of matter with spirit, male with female and the demonic with the unqualified goodness of Christ. This wider integration and its more inclusive Spirit is what he feels the unconscious is currently working in the West in the form of a new Spirit which would include even as it superseded the Spirit of the currently presiding divinities. In the passage you cite the idea seems to be that matter must be in the origin at least as a creative latency if it is in what precedes from the origin as it so obviously is. We have but to look around.

In this context I think his reference to Actus Purus is an effort to revision divinity in such a way that it be understood as the generative origin of what is and especially of human consciousness which it is forced to create in order to perceive its own self contradictions or, Jung's words, antinomies whose resolution it then demands be made in the life of individual and collective humanity. The implication would be that the archetypal origin of consciousness seeking the synthesis of its own polarities in its creature, consciousness, would then be the new "actus purus".

Jung could be having a bit of a laugh in his choice of words here which I would suspect he picked up from his dialogue with Victor White. For White and mediaeval theology, actus purus was anything but the active divinity Jung envisages in the energies of the archetypal. It was a concept of the perfect and the unchanging and the basis of an ultimate immovable stability in divinity as far distant as possible from a divine power seeking the resolution of its suffering in humanity's suffering its opposites toward their embrace as the meaning of history. One might distinguish the resting actus purus from the Trinity, in that the latter was intensely active within its own life but, for orthodoxy, in no way necessitated to go beyond its own life into creation. Some such as Eckhart denied such self-sufficiency affirmed by orthodoxy and described creation as a boiling over of Trinitarian life which the Trinity could apparently not control within itself. But then Eckhart prayed to the God who was actus purus to rid him of the God who was Trinity so that all distinction between his creaturehood and his native divinity would collapse in a moment's identification with this actus purus. In his sermon on poverty Eckhart identified with the actus purus, I suspect to get a rise out of the inquisition which he certainly did in his consequent trial. But from this moment of identity Eckhart returned to a very active engagement with the world around him. In its Aristotelian or Thomistic sense which I suspect Jung is caricaturizing here the term actus purus carries no connotation other than an attained perfection beyond all imperfection and change.

Yes, I think there is a trans-egoic power which could be described as transpersonal which transcends the ego and its consciousness. This dimension of psyche is, for Jung, without known boundaries within the living structure of the psyche greatly extended in its archetypal dimension in Jung's vision. Put simply the archetypal unconscious and its potentialities transcend ego consciousness personally, and historically in such a manner that consciousness will never fully assimilate them. I think this is the only valid meaning of "transcendence" in Jung. Within the psyche the archetypal transcends consciousness infinitely but nothing transcends the psyche itself thus understood.

I suspect your last question evidences a knowledge of physics and scientific cosmology that I do not possess. But as in the discussion between Jung and Pauli over synchronicity and other matters I would be reluctant, as were they, to enter into a form of literalism that would identify psychic energy with the energy that physics and astrophysics deal with. Jung and Pauli could show dramatic analogies between the psychic energies studied by psychology and those studied by physics but never identified them. They remained impressive analogies for both men. I would think your stats here might point to such an analogy, namely, that the potential of the archetypal has yet to be made conscious or even identified by consciousness in a ratio of 96 to 4. At the moment only 4/100ths of human potential and energy has been raised to consciousness.

All the very best,

John.

Byron Gaist – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear John,

Apology accepted about the misnaming.

The argument that the Jungian position is superior, because it can 'remove enmity' between religions, is only a heuristic which cannot hold water in the face of the demand for a criterion by which Jung's thesis of the 'archetypal basis of all religions' can be accepted. One may equally, and on more internally consistent grounds, argue that those who truly practise what their monotheistic faiths preach, would never commit acts of hatred or violence against others purely on the grounds of religious disagreements, or indeed engage in any warfare for any reasons other than necessary defense. Terrorism is not a religious act, but a political one.

I appreciate what you've written about "the real difference [being] in the conscious and experiential appropriation of the truth of whatever religion one possesses or is possessed by." This, correct me if I'm wrong, may connect with your very interesting post to John Hill about the 'inner Other'. I feel you, and Jung, are really on to something there. It's a profound question: when are we really ourselves? Are we, in fact, "possessed" by our religion / philosophy / psychology / politics, or do we - for want of a more appropriate expression - "possess" these?

I think sadly this may be where I and the Jungian position part ways, since Jung appears to have felt that one is in touch with the "inner Other" when the ego has been temporarily absorbed into the collective unconscious, where it presumably can encounter the Self, which it later attempts to incarnate in existential practice; my own experience suggests instead, that what St Paul meant, when he wrote "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20), was not (only) that he had contacted the natural wellsprings of life coded in his genetic structure, or even the archetypal images of primordial being; but instead, that his Saviour had reached out to him in a real, personal inner relationship, outside which his life no longer made sense.

Paradoxically perhaps, this "possession" did not make of St Paul less than himself, but more.

Best regards,

Byron

Steve Myers – Re: Actus Purus

John,

Thanks for your latest post on actus purus - which is very helpful to me as I'm trying to get my mind round some of the issues at the heart of Jung's "I know", of which your view of God is obviously highly relevant.

>>>[Jung] argues that a pathologically one-sided Christian Spirit must now bow to a more encompassing Spirit ... his reference to Actus Purus is an effort to revision divinity in such a way that it be understood as the generative origin of what is and especially of human consciousness which it is forced to create in order to perceive its own self contradictions... the archetypal origin of consciousness seeking the synthesis of its own polarities in its creature, consciousness, would then be the new "actus purus"<<<

I very much agree with you here, though I also very much agree with Byron aka Brian. One of the beginnings of this rather frayed Ariadne's thread, as I think Jung points out in Answer to Job, is Isaiah:45:7 (or Lamentations:3:38, or Amos:3:6), that suggests God is the source of both good and evil. This takes us quickly into the privatio boni argument that proved so fatal to Jung and White's relationship (and, if Jung is to be believed, to White himself) and to the perfection of Christ versus the wholeness of God.

>Jung could be having a bit of a laugh in his choice of words

ROFLMAO! Whence cometh the comedy?! ;-) You may be right, but as you go on to point out there may have been serious purposes behind his choice of words. Your description of Eckhart's use of 'actus purus' is fascinating - I didn't know that. I had seen the use of "actus purus" as part of Jung's vernacular argument to help Western Christianity see its own pathology in its own terms. That may still be the case, but the potentially allusive use of actus purus to refer back to Eckhart may give Jung's argument a particular significance - particularly in terms of the relation between God and reality...

>>>...the archetypal unconscious and its potentialities transcend ego consciousness personally, and historically in such a manner that consciousness will never fully assimilate them. I think this is the only valid meaning of "transcendence" in Jung. Within the psyche the archetypal transcends consciousness infinitely but nothing transcends the psyche itself thus understood.<<<

Thanks for the clarification, and this brings us nicely back to the question of what Jung meant by "I know". If I may be so bold, I'm going to try and put a counter-argument to see what you think.

My argument relates to my last question, where the introduction of the '96% of the universe that is unknown' was not meant to illustrate the depth of the unconscious, but that once we accept that there is an (unknowable) extra-psyche reality then there probably is quite a lot of said reality.

Even when sticking to a purely Cartesian viewpoint, transcendence not only becomes inevitable but probably scientifically provable. Although our minds have the four space-time dimensions embedded in them, "string theorists" currently posit eleven dimensions. Adding even just one dimension leads to some form of transcendence which you can illustrate by folding a piece of paper: the opposite edges, before folding, are inches apart; but the two edges can be joined as one when the paper is folded. From a two-dimensional perspective, this makes no sense (it is 'miraculous'), one needs to think in three dimensions to understand it. However, if "psyche is existence" and consciousness is limited to perceiving 4 dimensions, how do we relate to the other seven dimensions that probably exist?

To return to your second post in this thread, you made the comment that:

>>>those who think that the reality and the sense of God originate in extra-psyche domains have been relegated to the realm of the uncritical or pre-critical.<<<

In the light of current scientific knowledge I don't think it is tenable to exclude extra-psyche transcendence, and Jung was heading in that direction with synchronicity. Atoms are mostly empty space and the bit that isn't is still probably mostly empty space. The Large Hadron Collider experiment (currently broken) is trying to establish what it is that gives 'matter' its appearance of mass because there doesn't appear to be any "material reality" that underlies anything - so saying that my dog, my wife, a solid door, etc. are real is a somewhat troublesome claim. All matter is an illusion created by the psyche in response to an unknowable underlying reality, which is colloquially being called the "God particle". The really funny thing is, despite knowing this, all the scientists that I know get married, own dogs, and lock their doors when they leave the house, office, etc.. It illustrates that we need a four-dimensional imagination in order to function in the world (whatever 'the world' is).

I've just started reading Roger's book, and it strikes me that Jung's "psyche is existence" is more an assertion of his phenomenological standpoint than a denial of extra-psyche reality. I hope you don't think me too bold when I suggest that Jung was not trying to 'discredit the biblical imagination' - rather he accepted that we need it to function but was trying to heal the psychic damage in the psyche that had generated that biblical imagination.

Steve

John Dourley – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear Byron,

Your search for criterion demands an Archimedean point that would enable you to step out of the psyche and judge if from beyond. Jung denies the human possibility of doing so, though the various faiths, religious and political, enable their members to attain such a point which Jung exposes as the projection of archetypal forces beyond the psyche.

St. Paul was a victim of a dramatic entandiodromia. From killing Christians he became one. He would have great difficulty in recognizing the voice that addressed him on the way to Damascus as the voice of the self as would anyone undergoing an auditory and visual hallucination. Jungians value such hallucinations as revelatory of the content of the unconscious. You are correct though in understanding Paul's statement that Christ lives in him as one variant of a conscious relation to the self. Jung provides insight into the nature of this dynamic not available to Paul, though it should drive all believers religious and political to examine what possesses them.

As ever,

John.

Nathalie Pilard – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear John Hill,

I thought of your distinction between philosophy and psychology as the latter necessarily implying the Other, whereas it would not be the case for philosophy. I still think of it.

Concerning philosophy, the other can indeed be excluded. This is Descartes's heroic (the intentional lonesome heroic) act: "If I forget everything I know, what do I know?" . This is also, more fundamentally Levinas's "solitude". Levinas claims that being alone does not necessary imply the other. Hence it does not imply either the lack of the other or any choice with regard to the other, as the other is ontologically out of the picture.

Now concerning psychology and Jungian psychology, indeed the other cannot be excluded. Psychology is the relation to the other (the analysand, the unknown or even unknowable ...). However, in analytical psychology, the psychic transformations which allow either the individual or the collective individuation are nothing but the cancellation of the difference, of the other. The religious function of the psyche allows the reunification of the two pieces of the symbol (the metaphoric coin divided into two pieces). Synchronicity reunites matter and psyche. The sign reunites past and present. In other words, either analogy or the return to the same (the archetype, the collective unconscious, the Unus Mundus) allows the psychological process. The Self as the goal of individuation is perhaps the most paradoxical of Jung's notion with regard to the other... this is why I am still thinking of your point!

Thanks,

Nathalie

Steve Myers – Archimedean point

John,

>>>(To Byron): Your search for criterion demands an Archimedean point that would >enable you to step out of the psyche and judge if from beyond. Jung denies the human possibility of doing so<<<

Last week I challenged a similar statement to the above, that Jung denied the possibility of an Archimedean point. I said, from memory, Jung ruled in the possibility shortly after your reference in CW11. Unfortunately, my memory was in error and I suggested an incorrect reference, sorry. The passage I was thinking of was in Four Archetypes, p.102, the Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairytales, para 384:

"To inquire into the substance of what has been observed is possible in natural science only where there is an Archimedean point outside. For the psyche, no such outside standpoint exists - only the psyche can observe the psyche. Consequently, knowledge of the psychic substances is impossible for us, at least with the means at present available. This does not rule out the possibility that the atomic physics of the future may supply us with the said Archimedean point"

What this suggests is that to say Jung "denies the possibility" is to go too far, as he simply states that we do not have that Archimedean point *now*.

But he allows the possibility.

Steve

John Dourley – Re: Archimedean point

Steve,

I guess we'll just have to wait for physics to come up with such an Archimedean point to everyone's satisfaction. Personally I am not going to hold my breath.

As ever,

John.

Dan Anderson – Re: Archimedean point

Dear all,

It's simple: the psyche's Archimedean point is society, specifically its values, mores and laws. This is the standpoint outside of the psyche which is both human, objective and different.

The psyche and society are the two factors which remain in tension to promote individuation. A man might dream of sleeping with his best friend's wife, but, even if she is willing, he is very reluctant to do it. Why? It's wrong - certainly from the standpoint of his friendship it's wrong. How do we know? It's obvious. It's a basic violation of the social bond of friendship. Other values are set down in laws. From the psyche's standpoint, there's no problem with the affair. From a social standpoint, there is a big problem with the affair. The two, psyche and society, are at an impasse, as from time immemorial. But society and its values constitute the Archimedean point from which to view the psyche's products.

I'd submit that Jung could not see this because early on he dismissed society and its "collective thinking" with a wave of the hand. But, as I mentioned before, this strikes me as a huge mistake. Humans are instinctively social animals. One cannot ignore the social instinct without missing a big part of the psyche.

This, by the way, filters into the discussion of religion. Religions are the social manifestation of the psyche's religious function. Or, from society's Archimedean standpoint: the psyche's religious function is an introjection of society's religious function. Who knows which comes first? The psyche and society are the Archimedean standpoint of each other.

As for the role of religion in promoting war, I certainly can't argue with a consensus developed at an academic conference. But I would point to Jung's discussions with Pauli as support for the proposition that the extreme depth of matter (the atom) and the extreme depth of the psyche have a lot in common. That nuclear weapons even exist have a lot more to do with the destructive depth of the psyche than it does the destructive tendency of religions.

Best wishes,

Dan

Byron Gaist – Pre-Jungians

Dear John,

I'm aware of the fact that you feel violence is inherent to religion, especially in the case of the monotheisms, and it doesn't surprise me that this link has drawn increasing scholarly attention in recent years. I would modestly venture to suggest that the motives behind terrorist acts of violence are in fact complex and multifactorial, and when I wrote that terrorism is a political act, not a religious one, I was careful to clarify also that by 'religious', I meant the very best a religious way of life has to offer, not the deluded, self-willed acts of any specific nominal adherent of a religion, who may imagine they are justified to behave immorally when fighting for a cause they perceive as 'holy', or who believes the ends justify the means.

However, since you seem to feel the problem is inherent to religion, and not to human irrationality and pride per se, it may be worth considering whether the 'divinities' that you suggest are being 'constructed' to threaten the species, have anything in common with the divinity which the monotheistic religions do in fact worship. To me they sound more like man-made idols. You admit that terrorism and other 'isms' are political, albeit a politics sometimes tinged by what you suggest Jung would characterise as the terrorist's 'faith commitment'. To an extent, I can agree with this. The current crisis we are experiencing in Greece, however, is in fact the work of persons who would hate to describe themselves as members of a religious faith community, and would very readily cite their political allegiance as the motivation behind their actions. I would suggest instead, that the sort of terrorism we are witnessing today, is a modern phenomenon, not a medieval one, and it is in fact the logical consequence of being "possessed" by the spirit of rebellion and rejection of tradition which modernity is founded on, and operates by.

Terrorism is in that sense, one undesirable outcome of liberal democracy, whether it is committed by citizens of a nation taking the law into their own hands, or by the Bin Ladens of this world nominating themselves as the mouthpieces of Islam or any other faith. Hence, too, the idea of a group of modern, Western-style university academics writing scholarly papers which place the blame for terrorism on the shoulders of traditional religion, may be compared to the image of an alcoholic trying to cure his dipsomania by drinking whisky!

Wrt your other points, like Steve Myers I have also been surprised at your certainty that Jung rejects the possibility of the existence of an Archimedean point outside the psyche. I do not have the references to hand, but that was not the impression I got when I read 'The Undiscovered Self', and the reference Steve provides from 'Four Archetypes' corroborates my impression. With all due respect to your experience as a theorist and your well-written, well-conceived work in Jungian studies, which I have personally been influenced by - may the fact that you are not willing to 'hold your breath' until such an Archimedean point is discovered, be also related to the impatient way in which you imperiously dismiss the conversion experience of St Paul as 'dramatic enantiodromia'?! We may as well believe that Jesus himself was a borderline schizophrenic, or simply a liar; but I hope IAJS members would not be inclined to such facile psychohistorical diagnoses of figures from the 'pre-Jungian' era!

Best regards,

Byron

John Dourley – Re: Archimedean point

Dear Dan,

As I understand Jung his reference to an Archimedean point is to a point beyond the psyche accessible to the human from which the psyche can be objectively viewed. Jung's psychology understands such a point to be humanly unattainable since no one can step outside of the psyche which for Jung exhausts the human cognitive potential. To lodge since an Archimedean point in individual or collective consciousness is to fail to realize that both are products of the collective unconscious. This is particularly true of societal value which are always religious even when secular because secularity itself is based on an archetypal experience of reason, the ruling but constrained divinity in the West since the Enlightenment and the French revolution. Thus "society and its values" are not a point to view the psyche's products. Rather these values are themselves the products of the psyche. Thus the affirmation that the "psyche and society are the product of each other" would remain unconscious to the fact that the psyche produces society and its collective values. An individual caught up in society's predominant myth or myths would be as unconscious as the collective if he or she thought they stood beyond the psyche in relating to current societal values or to the values of any society which are themselves psychic products.

Nor would Jung understand the psyche in creating the myths that govern society now to rest its case or exhaust its potential with the configurations of current cultures throughout the world. When Jung depicts himself as a modern Joachim di Fiore in his letters to Victor White, LII, he is at least framing his psychology as a contributor to a now emerging myth in the West which would undermine by surpassing the inclusiveness of the West's now reigning myths. Just as Joachim was in part right at the end of the twelfth century in seeing a new age of the Spirit in the thirteenth so also Jung may well prove correct in seeing a new more encompassing Spirit at work in the creation of a new societal myth in the current West, one that could sacralize the feminine, the body and all it entails, the demonic as hated opponent and come finally to realize that divinity's approach to humanity is through the psyche and not from beyond it.

I should explain that the IAHR is the International Association for the History of Religion. It meets every five years in plenary session. The unifying theme for the 2005 meeting in Tokyo was Religion and Violence. I have misled the readers of the list if they understand I am talking of a "consensus" reached among the more or less 1600 scholars from East and West who attended the conference. I meant only to point to the fact that the focus of the meeting was on Religion and Violence and did not suggest a consensus beyond this unifying theme. In fact I was rather disappointed in that some of the best papers were, in fact, psychological studies of the faith of imprisoned terrorists. I thought they lacked the kind of in depth analysis that absolute faith in conjunction with Jung's identification of "absolute evil" as an archetypal reality might yield in linking collective and individual faith with violence in terms of projecting such evil on the other individuals and collectivities. Could Huntington be right that the archetypal bonding of societies needs an evil other?

Sincerely,

John.

Byron Gaist – Re: Archimedean point

Dan, I like what you wrote about society as the Archimedean point for the psyche. If John's reasoning is followed through, though it makes a lot of sense, it nevertheless leaves us with the apparent tautology that whatever man looks at, he is looking at it through his psyche. I have no problem with that at all. It's just that man is not a solipsistic individual consciousness existing in a vacuum. He is not just looking, but also being looked at. Society is looking at him, and I personally believe God, who created man, is

looking at both society and the individual (and the entire cosmos). No doubt John would label my belief a subjective fantasy, and that's a tenable intellectual stand. I just wonder by what criterion I should then be prevented from saying the same about his point of view.

Best regards,

Byron

Dan Anderson – Re: Archimedean point

Dear John,

It helps in connect with discussions such as these - which derive from what Jung said - to pay close attention to what Jung said. In the general index to the CW there are three basic references to the so-called Archimedean point: 13 CW §144, 16 CW §254, and 17 CW §§163-164. In 17 CW §§163, 164, Jung is discussing psychology, as a discipline, distinct from other natural sciences. He says, that psychology, the discipline, unlike natural science, "lacks the Archimedean point outside and hence the possibility of objective measurement."

In 13 CW §144, Jung is discussing an alchemical text - and he says such texts DO "give the investigator an Archimedean point outside his own narrow field of work, therewith an invaluable opportunity to find his bearings in the seeming chaos of individual events." Thus, Archimedean points are not ipso facto non-existent. Jung found one in alchemy.

In 14 CW §254, Jung says,

"The practical need for a deeper understanding of the products of the unconscious is sufficiently obvious. In pursuit of this ... I certainly try to avoid having any preconceived metaphysical opinions. I try rather to keep to first-hand experience, and to leave metaphysical beliefs, either for or against, to look after themselves. I do not imagine for a moment that I can stand above or beyond the psyche so that it would be possible to judge it, as it were, from some transcendental Archimedean point 'outside.' I am fully aware that I am entrapped in the psyche and that I cannot do anything except describe the experiences that there befall me."

From these passages, several things seem clear. Jung is focusing on a specific clinical problem. How can one evaluate the contents of the psyche objectively? How can there be any objectivity when the examiner (Jung, for example) is trying to examine another psyche using his own psyche? Jung poses the question in a way which seems to assume a two person situation: the analyst and the analysand. By his own account, Jung is describing a practical problem, not a metaphysical one. And, the practical problem would seem to have various solutions. First, we now have thousands of psychological studies which measure, as objectively as possible, the effectiveness of various therapies (and the theoretical biases they reflect). These provide Archimedean points, however imperfect. This goes to Jung's statements in 17 CW §§163, 164 that psychology as a discipline lacks Archimedean points of reference. Second, I posited society's values, mores and laws as Archimedean points of reference to the individual psyche. A cursory glance at Western drama beginning with Greek tragedy, through Shakespeare, to the present reveals the eternal dramatic tension between social demands and individual ones. Social values often oppose individual needs, and provide an Archimedean standpoint from which to evaluate the latter (and vice versa). Moreover, some social institutions, such as the law, can be quite objective -- addressing Jung's concern about escaping subjectivity. Third, Jung apparently considered alchemy to constitute an Archimedean point from which individual psychic products could be objectively evaluated. He certainly reached this conclusion based on his observation that alchemy consists of the projected collective contents of the alchemists.

Your point - since the collective unconscious underlies everything, every psychic and human cultural manifestation is a product of this so we remain "trapped" - reflects the sort of metaphysical perspective that Jung explicitly rejects as irrelevant to his concern about the lack of an "Archimedean point." He is not interested in metaphysics - even Jungian metaphysics. He is interested in practical ways of

examining the psyche which take out of the equation the subjective psyche of the examiner. I've noted 3 such ways. Perhaps there are more.

Finally, I find very utopian this idea that a new myth may be coming "that could sacralize the feminine, the body and all it entails, the demonic as hated opponent and come finally to realize that divinity's approach to humanity is through the psyche and not from beyond it." It's like waiting for the perfect woman to come along to marry. Only she never comes because the only place perfection exists is in Platonic spheres. The process of incorporation into reality seems to entail imperfection -- in religion and everything. Part of individuation, it seems to me, is the acceptance of the manifold limitations and shortcomings reality seems to consist of.

Best wishes,

Dan

Steve Myers – Re: Archimedean point

There are two questions
In this current debate.
But only one answer
For which John will wait.

Do we have for the psyche
An Archimedean point?
And my answer "no"
With John is joint.

Did Jung admit that
The possibility be?
On this point alone
Did we disagree.

But now John says "yes,
But don't hold your breath"
Cos when it comes
Will be after our death.

So on Archimedes
We are now of one mind
"Not now, but much later
Such a point one might find".

Steve

PS: Can I take this opportunity to wish Merry Christmas to all

Nathalie Pilard – Re: Archimedean point

Roger... Steve needs your meds :))

John Dourley – Re: Archimedean point

And can I back that Merry Christmas and applaud the poetry.

John

Mark Saban – Re: Archimedean point

Dear Daniel, John and Steve

My take on the Archimedean point is that Jung was being inconsistent with his own concept of psyche when he suggested that a future Archimedean point might emerge from the discipline of modern physics. As John says, for Jung it is impossible to step outside psyche. Clearly this opens him to accusations of circularity, but as several commentators have suggested (see Brooke, Jung and Phenomenology and Avens, The New Gnosis for examples) this is not necessarily a vicious circle. In the hermeneutic circle knower and known are interdependent, the meaning of the part depends upon an understanding of the whole and this requires a leap into the circle. It follows that interpretation from outside the circle cannot contribute anything meaningful. So it is with Jung's idea of the dream: "Above all don't let anything from outside, that does not belong, get into it, for the fantasy-image has everything it needs."

Daniel, I absolutely agree that the communal and societal is undervalued in Jungian thought, but it cannot logically supply an archimedean point from which to view psyche. Rather, a broad definition of psyche would include our political and social dealings with each other, so the circle of psyche would just be extended. As Jung says, "At bottom the psyche is simply world". Nor could Jung have seriously considered alchemy to be an archimedean point outside the psyche, if he consistently describes it as the projected psychic contents of the alchemist.

Mark

John Dourley – Re: Archimedean point

Dear Dan,

Let me start my reply to your well researched response from the bottom up. I think that throughout Jung's work he is insisting that the unconscious currently is sponsoring a superseding myth some of the major elements of which are included in what I have described as its contents. Jung in his Answer to Job was already aware of the demise of patriarchal consciousness. His peculiar take on the Assumption was that the Catholic Church, probably unconsciously, had divinized both the feminine and the body/material in 1950. Even among popular journalism the idea of demonization as the prelude to destruction is coming into critical fire. Saddam had to be a demonized before he could be killed. There is some social evidence of the mythic consciousness Jung thought the psyche currently sponsored is being realized.

When Jung denies metaphysics he is denying the kind of belief without evidence or experience that characterized his father's faith and ultimate depression fighting the doubts such faith induces. In this sense Jungian psychology is wholly divested of metaphysics and should remain so. In alternative perspectives Jung will identify the basis of metaphysics as the complex that controls the consciousness of the metaphysician. And again he describes himself as a "philosopher manque", admitting to some extent the philosophical and theological implications of his own psychology.

And here I would contend that his own psychology is itself a form of metaphysics and at the same time a very valid psychology. It is metaphysical in that it contains a full blown description of creation and fall (the emergence of the ego from the unconscious) redemption of both divinity and humanity in the same process (the Hegelian content of his Answer to Job) and his alchemical work with such metaphysical ideas as the "ground of being". More the reading of his works shows an appreciation of nearly every variant of Platonic and neo-Platonic thought throughout Western history. These essentially Jungian themes are at once metaphysical and psychological and Jung's ability in blending without violating either is a large part of his genius.

As regards the "Archimedean point" I think in CW 11 it obviously refers to the quest for an objective point beyond the psyche which is effectively the search for a transcendent God whose viewpoint, usually conveyed in what is called "revelation" as the basis of the religions, would then be an objective viewpoint. How could God be wrong? Jung in CW 11 makes this remark in the context of a paper

devoted to psychology and religion. This reference is not among those you cite. However Jung in CW 11 would be consistent with his words on the absence of "objective measurement" in his psychology. In CW 13 the Archimedean point allows an escape into alchemy from the narrow field of investigation. This does not refer to an Archimedean point beyond the psyche but to the superiority of an alchemic perspective in relation to the comparative narrowness of reigning viewpoints. In CW 14, he returns to the discussion of CW 11 where he denies the objectivity of an Archimedean point beyond the psyche which remains the transcendent God. However his full psychology greatly extends the meaning of "entrapment".

On the third last paragraph I would take the position that for Jung the relation between analyst and analysand in fact engaged and worked with the energies he describes in his metaphysics. To separate these elements of his psychology could eviscerate it. For instance, I doubt if evaluations of the various psychologies' efficacy are any more an Archimedean point than would be the evaluation of the religions or social systems supporting various civilizations. Where do these evaluations get their objectivity and how are they able to evaluate the transformation which may go on in an analytic relationship fostering the ingression of the self into the analysand's consciousness. I think this kind of evaluation would be a concession to an objectivity which Jung would consider superficial and unable to touch such powers as the efficacy of the numinous which for him was the real agent involved in analytic transformation. An imperfect Archimedean point defeats the concept. The point is to provide an objectivity from a source that is beyond the psyche and gainsay. Again in terms of the inevitable friction between society and individual I would simply repeat that the objective legal systems etc., and the individuals response to them are both products of the psyche and not of an Archimedean point beyond it. Certainly there is an objectivity in social structures. Apartheid in South Africa was based on an archetypal religiosity and its opponents were equally informed by an archetypal thrust for justice and racial equality. I would think that progress in social and individual values arise from such struggle. Such struggle does go back to its earliest depictions in Greek drama like Antigone. But in this friction generated by the unconscious on both sides there is hardly an Archimedean point beyond the conflict with a preferred or final resolution to it. Quite the contrary. Such friction is generated between the developing self of those individuals who oppose the structures of collective consciousness and the usually archetypal bases of these structures. The opposition is based on archetypal powers on both sides. Admittedly the opposition to social structures can be neurotic as Jung points out but can also arise from the legitimacies of the development of the self.

If there is an Archimedean point in Jungian psychology, I would think, it is lodged in the self of the individual and this self always develops in relation to the structures and strictures into which the individual is born. Except in cases of inflation where the ego identifies with and is defeated by the self the development of the self never provides the sense of objective certitude from a point beyond the psyche which the Archimedean point in discussion is alleged to do.

Many thanks for your time in the discussion.

John.

John Hill – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear Kathryn, John, Nathalie, all,

Kathryn, I appreciate the information on your new book. I am not acquainted with Boehme's work but your remarks on the paradoxical nature of nothingness are helpful. This might be the point where psyche's intentionality is arrested, a state of mind that I mention below, which is different from being blocked by fixed certainties.

John, thank you for your stimulating response and drawing attention to Jung's interesting commentaries on Eckhart. I appreciate your last paragraph, where you refer to Jung's understanding the "Other within" as an interiority, which encompasses the world without, "within" not being spatial, but rather understood as a presence of psyche in the world.

Your quote from Jung: "God...is no longer distinguishable from the ego", led me to read several times his commentary on Eckhart. This is a difficult text, and, if I understand it correctly, the commentary and your quote are to be understood within the context of an elaboration on the transcendent function. Experience of God here implies a living with the creativity of the unconscious, "a continual process" (CW 6, pars 428), probably inspired by Jung's foundational experiences in his confrontation with the unconscious (MDR). In same text, Jung quotes Eckhart's distinction between the Godhead and God and interprets it as follows "Godhead is all, neither knowing nor possessing itself, whereas God is a function of the soul, just as the soul is a function of the Godhead." (CW 6, par 429) This suggests that there is a deep unknowable unconscious (Godhead), the source from which the soul mediates symbols, images, personifications of God in a process of individuation. From the point of view of the soul's intentionality, I would suggest that transcendent function is one of a variety of experiences of divinity.

Nathalie, thank you for your comment, which occupied me for several days. I always find it intriguing how one assertion draws attention to the fact that its opposite might also be true. Your point about Descartes's and Levinas's philosophical analysis of a state of mind in which there is no ontological other, leads me to wonder if there is not a correspondent psychological experience. What about the mental and emotional anguish in times of crisis before some major change, as when one's life might feel bereft of meaning and of God, those moments of great doubt where nothing seems to move? The soul's intentionality is arrested; everything shuts down, a "waiting for Godot", which is a waiting in nothingness. And yet I presume there is an ego, registering those states of consciousness, which again introduces alterity. Jung implies a more radical state of consciousness in his commentary on the Tibetan Book of the Dead, where the detached mind experiences voidness in a transitional space between death and rebirth (CW 11, par 856). Perhaps the latter is closest to a consciousness where the distinction between self and other no longer holds. Then one would have to also consider pathological states of consciousness, obviously beyond the scope of this exchange.

I doubt if the purpose of analytical psychology is to cancel out difference. Yes the Jung's reconciling symbol, as one stage of the transcendent function, unites opposites, the symbol gradually being transformed into a new conscious attitude, which, as a "continual process", will in turn confront otherness.

John Hill

Dan Anderson – Re: Archimedean point

Dear Mark and all,

Mark, you raise an important point: is a pure Archimedean point even useful to understanding the psyche?

Let's clear the board and imagine the pure Archimedean phenomenon - something that would provide absolute objectivity visa-vi the human psyche. Byron mentioned, I believe, God. But I'm afraid even the Judeo-Christian God is out since we are told we were created in His/Her image. God, too, belongs to the psychic loop. We have to look elsewhere. So, let's imagine a super-intelligent (but not humanoid) alien from the planet Archimedeus who comes to Earth to examine us. But he lacks our psychology, and therefore insight into our actions. He maps some interesting behavioral patterns, but little else. Pure Archimedean objectivity does not help; it takes a human to have insight into human psychology. This, Mark, is I believe your point. What's really needed is not absolute objectivity, but perspective. Thus, I agree, the pure Archimedean point is dead.

Nevertheless, we can't lump psyche into a single undifferentiated mass. The collective unconscious, for example, differs significantly from individual psychology. This is why "possession by an archetype turns a man into a flat, collective figure, a mask behind which he can no longer develop as a human being." 7 CW §390. Yet, it is because of this difference that archetypal motifs provide essential perspective on individual psychology: they both belong and do not belong to the individual. This is why Jung is not all wrong in saying that alchemy provides an Archimedean point of reference. If the alchemical writings were simply the projections of the alchemists' personal unconscious they would not only provide no Archimedean point of reference, they would stand as worthless ravings. But Jung does not consider

them to be. Rather, they are projections of contents of the collective unconscious. 13 CW §253. Because these are archetypal contents they provide perspective on individual psychology. Not a pure Archimedean point, it is true, but useful perspective.

Social values can perform the same function. Society shares with the collective unconscious this "similar, yet dissimilar" quality relative to individual psychology which puts the latter in perspective. Early on, Jung explicitly recognized this functional parallel between the individual and society, and the individual and the collective unconscious. Later, he practically dropped society out of the mix - a regrettable development, I feel.

Thanks to all for this interesting discussion. Merry Christmas, and a Prosperous New Year!

Dan

John Dourley – Re: Pre-Jungians

Dear John,

Yes, I think this is what Jung is saying in his most protracted treatment of Eckhart. I did not relate these passages so much to the transcendent function as to the depth of the ingression of the soul into the unconscious. The dissolution of ego and unconscious into each other I think is the psychological equivalent of Eckhart's "breakthrough", the experience of his identity with the Godhead which he carries back with him to his surrounding environment. I would see this process as potentially universal and wholly intrapsychic and not unrelated to the individuation process though few of us undergo it in such depth and dramatic intensity..

John, a very merry Christmas and all the best in the New Year,

John.

John Dourley – Re: Archimedean point

Dear Mark,

I fully agree with your first paragraph. I do have to wonder about claims that Jung's psychology undervalues the communal and societal. His concept of the isms argues that all societies rest their cohesion on whatever archetypal power or powers bond them. And as I have said to other respondents his conception of the ground of being implies that his psychology fosters as universalism which move toward the relation of each individual to the totality through the relation of the individual to his or her interiority and the universal ground that supports it. I doubt if many societies, religious or political, can sponsor such compassion.

Sincerely,

John.

Nathalie Pilard – Re: Pre-jungians

Dear John,

Thanks for your stimulating reply, I am happy that you provide the discussion with other examples and ideas, and your point is far from being exhausted.

About the alter-ego registering things in the period preceding changes when " The soul's intentionality is arrested; everything shuts down, a "waiting for Godot", which is a waiting in no thingness" happens.

Yes, these periods happen after a more or less dissociation of the psyche. The waiting for Godot and the non intention of the soul are not fundamental but temporal. Consciousness experiences nothingness because it has been dissociated from its soul, and this state is the way available for the soul to express itself. Hence, this is a temporal alterity in order for the unity of the unconscious and consciousness to happen... and then consciousness will reconfront alterity again, and again... till the reach of the -maybe unreachable- Self which is the resolution of the problem unity/alterity that alchemy captured, and Chinese thought.

By contrast, alterity and unity are indeed fundamentally overstepped in the Tibetan Book of the Dead, but alterity/unity has almost never been an Eastern knot or problematic. This is why Jung found such a relief in the reading of the I Ching in the Tens. A relief, not a goal, Jung knew Eastern thought was the Western thought alterity. Like you, I don't think the purpose of analytical psychology, as it works on the living, on a process, is to cancel out difference, is unity. But I think Jung was more prone to see alterity in the Western culture than unity, and hence he thought that unity was not a goal, but his means - the peculiarity of analytical psychology - to hold the balance between the different aspects of alterity. A quick look at the Jungian terminology reveals a strong "unity" tone that you cannot see in other psychologies (Lacan big Other for instance!). But Jung last writings concerned alchemy, and I intuit that if analytical psychology's goal is not unity, it has always been his own, the unreachable star, and hence the intentionality of all his work.

Nathalie

Nathalie Pilard – Re: Archimedean point

Dear Daniel, Dear Mark, Dear all,

Just a very little intuition about the Archimedean point.

"Is a pure Archimedean point even useful to understanding the psyche?" Indeed. I would add: "Should we talk of any point to understand the moving - vibrating reality unless we consider ourselves wisemen able to sit on a precise place (point) and capture it. The Archimedean point is a false primary, if objectivity has to be captured it would be on a relation, on a tension. The point is a result, a resolution.

Nathalie

Steve Myers – Re: Archimedean point

Mark,

>>>My take on the Archimedean point is that Jung was being inconsistent with his own concept of psyche when he suggested that a future Archimedean point might emerge from the discipline of modern physics.<<<

Jung's suggestion of the possibility of an Archimedean point for the psyche is certainly paradoxical - by definition it is both intra- and extra-psyche at the same time - but how much would remain of analytical psychology if we excluded ideas for being paradoxical?

Logical consistency is 'but a one-sidedness that loses its meaning when extra dimensions are added. This can be illustrated by the imaginary number ("i") in mathematics, which ordinary logic suggests is a single number yet it must be a positive and a negative number at the same time. This paradox does not render "i" unreal or useless, as these days it is regarded as being very "real" and used in all sorts of applications from satellite navigation to powering your home (see "imaginary number" on wikipedia for more info on the reality of "i").

There is a natural tendency, because of the limiting categories of our own minds, to view Cartesian thinking from within the four timespace dimensions When a genius such as Jung starts to break free from those limits it is sometimes difficult to work out where one, as a dwarf, is standing. Is it on his

shoulders, so one is seeing further, or has one jumped back down onto the ground, and is therefore criticising his ideas from a more limited viewpoint?

Answering that question regarding an Archimedean point brings us to another paradox - for it seems we cannot know until we find it, but we will only find it if we assume that it exists and go looking for it.

Steve

Mark Saban – Re: Archimedean point

Steve

I quite agree about the paradoxical nature of Jung's psychology and indeed of the psyche. I also agree with what you say about Cartesian thinking. In fact the idea of an Archimedean point is itself Cartesian, in that it depends on the idea of the external objective eye looking onto something (*res extensa*) to which it is unconnected. Which is exactly why it is inappropriately applied to psychic existence. We may be dwarves next to Jung, but should that stop us pointing out what we see as inconsistencies and theoretical problems in his psychology? Any other attitude surely leads to fundamentalism.

Mark

Steve Myers – Re: Archimedean point

Mark,

>>>In fact the idea of an Archimedean point is itself Cartesian, in that it depends on the idea of the external objective eye looking onto something (res extensa) to which it is unconnected. Which is exactly why it is inappropriately applied to psychic existence<<<

The sort of (abstract Cartesian) possibility that I have in mind is akin to that of positioning some form of mirror outside the psyche, where the reflection obtained by viewing it from within the psyche contains both psychic and non-psychic data, and therefore provides some form of useful objective measurement.

It is a bit like bouncing light off the moon where you get the same light back (though modified) and within a certain timescale. The additional objective data (time) can be used to determine how far away the moon is from each point where light is sent. Satellite navigation uses that principle (of the difference in time of the signal from multiple satellites) to help establish your exact position in the world.

If I can call this psychic mirror "Psychic Imaginary Equipment" then it may seem PIE-in-the-sky (spot the attempt at humour :-)) but there are already techniques for providing objective measurement of certain aspects of the psyche. Jung's Word Association Tests are a crude but still interesting example, whilst psychometrics, brain scans and dissociative/unconscious discrimination tests provide other angles on this.

Another area of potential interest imho is the use by internet search engines of vectors in wordspace to determine meaning. This doesn't have a fixed number of dimensions, but views meaning as a vector space that has a high and unlimited number of dimensions. This latter type of vector approach is perhaps more appropriate to *res cogitans*.

So, though I agree with you on all your other points, I do hold out the possibility that it may be possible at some point in the future to establish an Archimedean point or points outside the psyche that yield useful objective data.

Steve