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## Introduction

Welcome to the 2018 issue of the *Journal of Jungian Scholarly Studies*. This year, my first as General Editor, confirmed for me the sweetness of respectful collaboration. The expertise of the editorial staff; the gracious mentorship by my predecessor, Inez Martinez; and the authors' and reviewers' dedication to excellence, made it possible to produce a peer-reviewed publication that demonstrates the relevance of Jungian thought in a tumultuous world.

Essays in this collection reflect the theme of the 15th annual conference held in Arlington, Virginia: "Complexity, Creativity, Action." The significance of our location—across the Potomac from the White House—was not lost on the individuals who gathered to hear papers in June 2017. Jungians, like other serious intellectuals, are challenged to engage in the heated and often dissonant cultural discourse that has only intensified since the presidential election of November 2016. As depth psychologists, we are obligated to reject simple explanations bounded by the spirit of the times. The prevailing social and political chaos is complex and requires creative thought and action—in prose, poetry, and art.

The first essay, entitled "Trump's Base, Ahab, and the American Dream" by Inez Martinez, is a compelling transdisciplinary study that uses Jungian complex theory and Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* to analyze the fury and rage of Trump supporters. The erosion of white-male dominance in America has produced a victim complex, Martinez argues, that bears strong similarities to Ahab's sense of victimization by the white whale. Ahab is trapped in a losing struggle for dominance and meets his end forever bound to the thing he vowed to kill. Ishmael, on the other hand, survives by embracing diversity and interdependence. His survival, Martinez says, suggests a creative possibility for all US citizens: to re-vision the American dream so that the individual pursuit of happiness is modulated by concern for the common good.

Concern for a common good is also a theme of Jonathan Vaughn's essay, "Soul-Searching at Standing Rock." Like Martinez, Vaughn uses Jungian complex theory to explore the conflict between members of over 300 Native American tribes and the private company, Energy Transfer Partners, hired to build the Dakota Access Pipeline. Vaughn argues that two cultural complexes, a Native Complex and a Pilgrim Complex, which have been continuously functioning since the nation's founding, manifested in the Standing Rock controversy. Whereas the Native Complex is characterized by the perceived invisibility of indigenous peoples, the Pilgrim Complex is characterized by a separatist drive that demands freedom at all costs (even death) and justifies destructive, genocidal behavior as a means of preserving colonial culture and community. Vaughn points out that both complexes intersect at a place where each group intensely seeks freedom, relevance, and acceptance.

The complex political conflict that Martinez and Vaughn address in their essays is the subject of Joli Hamilton's analysis of the drug abuse, sexual manipulation, and murder dramatized in the television series *House of Cards*. The power-obsessed central characters, Frank and Claire Underwood, are morally repugnant yet strangely enticing; audiences flock to the show's grotesque imagery. To explain this phenomenon, Hamilton creates a dialogue between Jacques Lacan's theory of the phallus and Thomas Moore's

discussion of the sadistic aspect of psyche. The intense dramatic events in the series, she argues, are the necessary sacrifice of innocence required to increase consciousness. *House of Cards* ravishes American political ideals and depicts a multitude of perversions possible in the bureaucratic shadows of its fictional world. Hamilton concludes that it is dangerously naïve to focus exclusively on the light aspects of psyche or passively enjoy the darkness depicted in the series as mere entertainment. She suggests instead an active and creative response to the multitude of perversions evident in fiction and in reality: the intentional psychological digestion of darkness, as necessary today as it was in the time of the Marquis de Sade.

The theme of an inclusive psyche featured in Hamilton's essay is central to Matthew Fike's analysis of Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands*. Although *Borderlands* aligns with Jungian psychological concepts and is particularly indebted to James Hillman's *Revisioning Psychology*, Fike demonstrates how Anzaldúan thought re-visions that work by emphasizing expanded states of awareness, body wisdom, and the spirit world. For Anzaldúa, a more inclusive vision of the psyche is reflected in El Mundo Zurdo (the Other World) of the personal and collective unconscious, dreams, and creative imagination. El Mundo Zurdo is real, and Anzaldúa accesses it in the writing process through becoming a conduit for imagery from the collective unconscious. Fike concludes his sophisticated analysis by arguing that Anzaldúa and her text embody and enact the change that she seeks to inspire in her readers: dwelling in a third thing, a Borderland, that acknowledges but transcends binary points of view.

Anzaldúa's writing process, in which she places her conscious mind in service to imagery arising from unconsciousness, expresses a theory of creativity that Jonathan Erickson explores in his essay "Jung and the Neurobiology of the Creative Unconscious." Creativity, which has always been a mystery, has attracted numerous theories to explain it. There has been explosive interest in the interdisciplinary field of creativity studies, with more than 10,000 papers published in a single decade (1999 to 2009). The essay begins with a brief excursion on C. G. Jung, who asserts an inextricable link between creativity and the unconscious, then segues into a discussion of recent neurobiological accounts of conscious creativity. While noting our understandable cultural fascination with the brain, Erickson warns against the reductive materialism inherent in the biological perspective. We of the depth psychological persuasion, he concludes, should be mindful not to allow the current prominence of neuroscientific models to eclipse or, or even worse, devour our field.

We continue the innovative practice, begun last year, of including poetry and art in the *Journal* since they too furnish a creative response to complexity. A separate section includes all of the art selected for this year's issue, accompanied by the artist's statements about the work. Selected works have been paired with the essays and poems to create a conversation between image and text.

On behalf of the editorial team, wonderful collaborators all, I welcome you to Volume 13 of the *Journal of Jungian Scholarly Studies*.

Elizabeth Eowyn Nelson,  
General Editor

## 2018 ESSAYS, ART, AND POETRY

## **To You Who Are Next**

Inez Martinez

I sing the past  
of the soon-to-be-extinct species human.  
Whoever comes after,  
know  
we carved spaces for our games played  
by the strongest, most agile, fleetest bodies among us;  
we painted caves, cliffs, paper, screens with all the colors  
our eyes were gened to see;  
we raised shelters that  
waved on pegs above water,  
flowed in curves toward the ice,  
rose from the ground toward the stars;  
we moved rivers, dammed them to grab  
lightning from the sky;  
we sought secrets of invisibly tiny  
and immeasurably far,  
lived night dreams by day,  
spawned words and languages, fictions and poems,  
caught bits of our past through writing and drawing,  
cast our voices on sound waves over oceans,  
our images around the earth in pixels,  
and oh, our music! drums, strings, horns, flutes, bells!

Facing ourselves,  
we imagined and practiced  
torture and charity,  
slavery and freedom,  
war, prosperity, commerce, poverty,  
a dream of justice, lawful oppression,  
and religions sanctioning them all.

Oh there were moments,  
I wish you could live those moments—  
exslaves claiming “I am Spartacus,”  
Danes, golden-starred, shielding Jews,  
Persons black, white, brown, gay, straight,  
braving clubs, jail, death  
for one another—

and daily moments, too,  
when we laughed, confided, danced, loved—



In truth,  
we were sometimes brave, usually not,  
sometimes kind, often cruel,  
always, always fools—

We were not wise,  
yet  
(can you not sense the throb of us,  
the centuries and days of all of us?)

Know  
we were alive!

### Sea Horse



Elizabeth Eowyn Nelson,

## Trump's Base, Ahab, and the American Dream

Inez Martinez

**Abstract:** This transdisciplinary study argues that the fury of President Trump's base can be understood as a victim complex, one caused by the erosion of the dominance of white males that existed at the founding of America. The preamble of the Declaration of Independence became an iconic articulation of the American dream, unintentionally establishing a contradiction between the ideas that all people are created equal and that individuals have an unlimited right to pursue happiness. Analysis of Ahab of Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* reveals connections between Ahab's victim complex and the behavior and attitudes of Trump's base. Analysis of Ishmael's survival suggests ways the American dream as articulated in the Declaration of Independence needs to be dreamed forward. His survival through interdependence and an embrace of diversity suggests a way to re-vision the American dream so as to incorporate psychological determinants, including the limitations of the ego, in the understanding of freedom and happiness. Revisioning the individual pursuit of happiness as limited by the common good furthers the dream of equality under the law and could help free white supremacists from their entrapment in a victim complex convincing them of their entitlement to dominate others.

**Keywords:** victim complex, Trump's base, Ahab, American dream, white supremacy, individualism

Televised images of supporters of candidate and now President Donald Trump at his rallies shock: their glee at his hateful characterizations of non-whites, the hatred in their anti-Clinton chant, "Lock her up!," their violence against protestors at Trump's urging, and their fascistic adulation of Trump's grandiosity as he claims to be the way to "make America great again"—these images of fury unleashed demand to be understood. Why are these people so exultantly rageful?

Commentators' most sympathetic analysis has been that people in Trump's predominantly white (Henley) base feel left out, left behind, particularly economically.<sup>1</sup> Economic loss alone, however, seems too rational an explanation. Charles Homans, political editor for *The New York Times Magazine*, describes the economic loss being experienced by the white middle class as a receding of the American dream. Post-Jungian theorist Tom Singer surmises that the most furious of Trump's supporters are "people who previously saw themselves as having a solid place in American society [who] now find themselves marginalized and drifting downward—both socially and economically—or as never having had a chance of making progress toward the American dream" (37). He further defines Trump's representation of the American dream as "the materialistic power version" (41). These connections between some loss and the American dream seem to me key to understanding the ferocity of Trump's base. His followers seem emotionally caught in what clinical psychologist Elizabeth Mika, citing sociologist

Michael Kimmel, calls “aggrieved entitlement” (306).<sup>2</sup> Using the post-Jungian language ascribing complexes to groups in cultures (Singer and Kimbles), I postulate that Trump’s followers, feeling themselves denied an entitlement promised by the American dream, are gripped by a victim complex.

The American dream is given its most iconic voice in the “self-evident truths” affirmed toward the beginning of the Declaration of Independence. There, as American children are taught in history classes, America declared itself a nation free of its colonial master and further declared its citizens—created equal—entitled to God-granted rights. The thirteen colonies proclaimed: “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” This assertion of equality was much more comprehensive than the then-existing or ensuing enactment. In young America, the power of the white father was unequalled. It was even more extensive than in Europe. J. Weiss in her article on fathering and fatherhood in colonial America points out that “English colonists expanded on the English laws and practices of family government, creating fathers who were among the most powerful household heads in the Western world, largely because of their control of the labor of subordinate household members, children, servants, and slaves” (351). Even more empowering to patriarchal white male supremacy than family structure was the contradiction between claiming that all men are equal while institutionalizing slavery in the U. S. Constitution and in the American economy. The Constitution included chattel slavery among its considerations of representation and taxation. Chattel slavery meant that whites could buy, own, chain, work, whip, rape, maim, and even, if the white owner wished, kill black African slaves stolen from their homeland and then bred for profit. This contradiction led not only to the Civil War, but also to the continued assumption of white supremacy that informs the victim complex of Trump’s supporters today.

Surprisingly, the Index of Carl Jung’s *Collected Works* contains not a single entry under “victim.” Jung, Sigmund Freud, James Hillman, and many others have explored literary works as a primary source for understanding psyche, a practice that Susan Rowland has elaborated as an instance of transdisciplinarity (3). When I turn to imaginative literature to seek understanding of an American victim complex, the enraged Ahab of Herman Melville’s profoundly American novel, *Moby-Dick*, springs to mind. Ahab, consumed with fury at having suffered dismemberment by a creature he assumed was his to capture and dismember, personifies being enslaved to a victim complex.

Edward F. Edinger, in his extensive study of Melville’s novel, calls Ahab “a primordial image that lie[s] deep in the American soul” (27). Both he and Jungian critic James Kirsch see in Ahab a journey toward the Self but disagree about the success or failure of the journey. Edinger concludes that Ahab with the words, “*Thus I give up the spear!*” (136), successfully surrenders his ego to the greater Self and that his death, tied to the whale as to the Great Mother, represents a *coniunctio* (56). Kirsch concludes the opposite, that the collision between Ahab and the whale represents Melville’s own failure in the individuation journey (54–74). I share neither of these conclusions<sup>3</sup> but do agree that the issue of the individual ego and its relation to that which is greater than itself is central to Ahab’s character, and thus to understanding how his obsession with having been victimized sheds light on the fanaticism of Trump’s supporters. Ahab’s relentless

assertion of his will against a force of nature, the white whale, reveals the underbelly of the American claim of a limitless right to pursue happiness and exposes the grandiosity of the ego's search to assert such power regardless of consequences to others. Ahab's vendetta provides a grim warning about American individualism conceived as unlimited by the common good.

The perception of the specifically American quality of Ahab's character and fate has been echoed throughout the criticism of *Moby-Dick*,<sup>4</sup> persistently focusing on the implications of American individualism. The American literary historian F. O. Matthiessen, for example, writes: "Melville created in Ahab's tragedy a fearful symbol of the self-enclosed individualism that, carried to its furthest extreme, brings disaster both upon itself and upon the group of which it is a part" (79). Sacvan Bercovitch in his intellectual history of American literature also sees the destruction of the monomaniacal Ahab as an argument for the containment of individualism (193). Harold Bloom, editor of the anthology of criticism of the character, Ahab, writes in his introduction that "Ahab's quest is supremely American because its God is identical with the inner self." (4). Through the character of Ahab, Melville depicts the inflation of the American claim of the unqualified right to pursue happiness and the catastrophe that follows upon the vengeance born of the inevitable thwarting of that claim. This paper argues that members of Trump's base, psychological inheritors of the privileges accorded white people—in particular white males—at the founding of the country, exhibit Ahab-like rage at the loss of presumed rights to dominance. It argues further that this sense of entitled outrage is rooted in the founding American dream, which failed to qualify individual rights with responsibility for the common good.

Ahab, a white male American, dramatizes entitlement to supremacy as a ship's captain. His ship, the *Pequod*, is peopled with humans from all over the globe, including the harpooners Queequeg from the South Sea Islands; Daggoo from Africa; and Tashtego, a Native American from Martha's Vineyard. Melville describes the crew as "An Anarcharsis Cloutz deputation," referencing Jean Baptiste Cloutz who in 1790 took to the French National Assembly a "deputation of foreigners whom he had picked up in Paris, thus dramatizing the sympathy of all mankind with the French Revolution" (166n). Melville's careful rendering of the spectrum of colors of humanity serving under the authority of Ahab represents the hierarchy of white male supremacy, a hierarchy even applying to white on white since Ahab masters his white officers and crew members as well.

Even with the unlimited powers of a captain at sea, however, Ahab experiences himself as a victim. Instead of being turned into whale oil, the white whale Moby Dick turns Ahab into a one-legged man, a suffering of humiliation even more infuriating than the actual loss of the leg. Ahab both literally and figuratively no longer has the leg of entitled supremacy to stand on. Suffering, of course, happens to everyone. What makes someone experience suffering as victimization? A defining characteristic of feeling victimized is resentment, an emotion, as Edinger notes, possessing Ahab (67—8). The entire whaling industry existed on the premise that nature is to be man's prey, not his master.<sup>5</sup> Ahab, captain of his ship, an image for being in control of his life, personifies the American mythology of individualism. That is why he fulminates against fate's permitting his rightful prey to turn on him, rip his good leg right out from under him, and

win. He can tolerate no challenge to his control. Confronting first mate Starbuck's temerity in questioning him, he insists, "There is one God that is Lord over the earth, and one captain that is lord over the Pequod" [sic] (604). The loss of control over his life because of a powerful external force such as a whale resisting its hunters excites righteous resentment in Ahab, a response signifying his sense that successful opposition is an injustice. Trump's base exhibits comparable outraged resentment. Their resistance to Mexicans and Muslims, for example, is based on an assumption that America is theirs. As Ahab is entitled to kill whales, they are entitled to eject and reject non-white immigrants. The fact that Mexicans keep coming to America and that Muslims live here as citizens violates their assumed right to the land and culture of America. As Ahab roused his crew to right the wrong of Moby Dick's existence, they ecstatically support the ideas of barring all Muslims from America and building a literal wall to keep Mexicans out.

But what turns experiencing suffering as victimization into a complex? A characteristic of any complex is its compulsiveness. Ahab presents himself as utterly incapable of making any choice other than to pursue Moby Dick to the death. He protests:

What is it, what nameless, inscrutable, unearthly thing is it, what . . . hidden lord and master, and cruel, remorseless emperor commands me; that against all natural lovings and longings, I so keep pushing, and crowding, and jamming myself on all the time; recklessly making me ready to do what in my own proper, natural heart, I durst not so much as dare? (685)

The replacement of normal ego control by a complex is also revealed in the failure of Ahab's experience to persuade him to reconsider his mission of vengeance. After having survived a second day of giving chase to Moby Dick, which saw all three boats smashed, their crews tossed into the sea, and Ahab's whalebone leg splintered, Ahab has reason and time to alter course. The morning of the third day, as he directs the helmsman to follow Moby Dick's wake, he finds himself responding to the freshness of an exquisite dawn. He says, "What a lovely day again! Were it a new-made world, and made for a summer-house to the angels, and this morning the first of its throwing open to them, a fairer day could not dawn upon the world" (709). He almost considers how such a fair day might be lived, but resisting even the thought of doing anything but hunting Moby Dick, he cries out: "Here's food for thought, had Ahab time to think; but Ahab never thinks; he only feels, feels, feels" (709). Since throughout all the chapters in which he appears, Ahab is almost obsessively analytical and reflective, this line about being overwhelmed with feeling underscores the power of the complex to control in spite of Ahab's proven capacity for thought.

That kind of power seems operative in the unfazed support of Trump's base in the face of Trump's violating his campaign promises by his turning the cabinet into a plutocracy rather than "draining the swamp," his demanding tax dollars to build the border wall rather than having Mexico pay for it, and his giving tax breaks to the most wealthy at the expense of health care for any of his supporters who happen to be old, poor, or very sick. No matter how much his practices belie his words, the facts and reason do not sway his supporters' behavior, evidence of its compulsive nature.

That Ahab's response of self-righteous rage is characteristically American is made clear in the chapter in which Ahab's ship, the *Pequod*, meets the British ship, the *Samuel Enderby*.<sup>6</sup> This encounter also dramatizes Ahab's loss of power through his having been crippled. Understanding that the *Samuel Enderby* has encountered Moby Dick, Ahab rushes to visit its captain, an impetuous move that results in his realizing the ignominy of his inability to climb to the deck. Cables have to be lowered to bring him on board. This incident is one of Melville's more poignant portrayals of Ahab's hatred of dependence. His loss of his leg has brought home to him that vulnerability is part and parcel of having a body. He expresses his disgust over this limitation when, after losing his whalebone leg on the second day of the chase, the same leg as was ripped from him as flesh, he cries, "Oh, oh, oh! How this splinter gores me now! Accursed fate! That the unconquerable captain in the soul should have such a craven mate! . . . My body'" (705). The inflated fantasy of unlimited freedom and power, presumed birthright of the white American male, is punctured by the limitations of having a body liable to being wounded. Ahab's response is to curse this fate. Similar rage over a frustrated fantasy attempting to empower the body, the fantasy that its whiteness should guarantee dominance, erupts in enraged white supremacist protests, such as the march in Charlottesville held by neo-Nazis emboldened by Trump's racism.

Once on deck of the *Samuel Enderby*, Ahab presses its captain for the story of his encounter with Moby Dick, an encounter that took the captain's arm. He and Ahab greet one another by crossing a whalebone arm and a whalebone leg. When Ahab hears that the *Samuel Enderby* has twice more crossed paths with Moby Dick, he is flabbergasted to learn that the captain did not give chase. The British captain responds: "'ain't one limb enough? What should I do without this other arm?'" (563). What the British captain lacks is the American individual's sense of a *right* to control over his life.

Deprived of that control, Ahab feels entitled not only to destroy what he sees as the agent of the universe's maleficent power, the white whale, who made a mockery of his pose of control, but also to convert those he is responsible for, his crew, into participating in his mission of hate. His sense of entitlement is much like that of the white supremacists, misogynists, and nationalists who seek converts to their hatred of black people's, women's, and immigrants'—particularly Muslim immigrants'—having rights when white men, white women, and Christians are not in control of their lives and successfully achieving happiness. Cal Jillson attributes the acquiescence of Ahab's crew to democracy's vulnerability to tyranny through the "moral failings" of the people (95–6).

Ahab's character reveals that an American formula for feeling victimized and justified in behavior both vindictive—"Lock her up"—and violent—"Get them out of here. Knock the crap out of them" (White)—eventually manifests in a collective ecstatic expression of hate. The power fantasy embedded in the American Dream that one need not be concerned about any harm done to others in the free pursuit of one's happiness is based on denial of being responsibly connected to others. The fate of the *Pequod* under the possessed Ahab, its destruction and disappearance in the ocean's waters, which connect all places and all their inhabitants, is emblematic of the flaw in the American dream of individual entitlement. Precisely the failure of that dream to include awareness of interdependence lies behind Trump supporters' backing of denigrating international

cooperation through NATO; of pulling out of the Paris Accord, which tries to ameliorate human effects upon the life systems of the earth; and of building a wall to keep others out.

The part of the Declaration of Independence and the American dream that is anathema to Trump's base is the clause stating that all people are created equal. America's gradual progress toward realizing the equal rights of all human beings—the emancipation of the slaves, the gradual extension of the power to vote to all American citizens of sufficient age, and the redefining of women's roles and of what constitutes family—renders equal, rather than superior, people who had experienced dominating others as a birthright bestowed by maleness and whiteness. The Women's Studies scholar, Peggy McIntosh, in her ground-breaking essay on the powers granted whiteness and maleness details many ways that race and gender determine the unconscious experience of dominance. McIntosh, based on her understanding of how males are unaware of the culturally systemic ways they effortlessly enjoy dominance, discovers analogously forty-six unearned powers and protections she enjoys by being white. The erosion of the culturally bestowed privileges of whiteness accounts for the Ahab-like fury at authority expressed by Trump's base, many of whom are white women. While propertied white males have from the beginnings of America been granted power over others through both their gender and their race, white women have enjoyed the cultural privileges of whiteness. In particular white wives and mothers have benefited from the culturally accorded privileges enjoyed by their white husbands and sons. The white supremacists, male and female, in Trump's base have targeted government run by liberals and by women who think to rule, forces that legalized the changes that have eaten away at their privileged place in the social hierarchy. Some of them, like white nationalists, paramilitary militias, and lone terrorists, countenance and sometimes enact violence, practices of hatred that Trump has affirmed as arising from "good people" in his response to the neo-Nazi violence in Charlottesville (Keneally).

Those supporting Trump because of the loss of white dominance apparently value unlimited power. They accepted his attitude toward use of nuclear power when, as a candidate, he asked, why have nuclear weapons if not to use them? (Zurcher). His repeated declarations during rallies that he would support not only waterboarding, but worse tortures, thus violating the Geneva Conventions, were greeted with roars of approval. Their belief in rule by threat of violence continues the long American tradition of using oppressive power to enrich ourselves. Under white-male dominated governments, despotic power has been legalized in the U.S. Constitution's acceptance of slavery, in the occupation and westward expansion of the country over the bodies and cultures of indigenous peoples, in anti-labor laws, in legally granting corporations privileges of persons, and in equating money with free speech. In their devotion to power unchecked by laws seeking the rights of all, Trump's white supporters are like Ahab's crew who are caught up in Ahab's claim of ultimate authority. Maurice Friedman points out that Ahab goes even beyond Aeschylean Prometheus in his claim to have no power over him, in particular no superior arbiter of truth: "Ahab arrogates to himself all the authority of truth." (86). Trump's similar arrogation when he Tweets what Kellyanne Conway terms "alternative facts" feeds the complex entrapping his base. They, like Ahab's crew awed by Ahab's grasping the harpoon lit by lightning and defying the

corposants burning atop the *Pequod's* masts, submit to Trump's authority out of their own fantasy of a leader who will impose upon the world his will to power, which mirrors their own.

Ahab's will to power implicitly reveals the tyranny contained in a desire for limitless freedom, an insight expressed by literary critic Michael Paul Rogin, citing Michael Gilmore: "[Ahab] reveals the rebellion and the desire for domination entangled in the wish to be free" (130).<sup>7</sup> Trump's attacks on "political correctness," that is, on the repression of the sense of entitlement to dominate others, indicate the kind of freedom his base desires. His mockery of the disabled, his claims of the right sexually to assault women, and his exhortations to violence against opponents, model "freedom" as dominance by the physically strong and culturally privileged. It is this version of "freedom" that his base, particularly his white male base, wishes to have resurrected in their support of his mantra, "Make America great again."

The conclusion of this novel anticipates the end awaiting the ship of state of a people pursuing, as a birthright, happiness without concern for the good of others. That mindset leads to hating to pay taxes for the common good—for helping others get education, health care, clean air and water. It leads to seeking privileged lifestyles flagrant with consumption at the price of planetary degradation. It leads to feeling victimized when the culturally spawned illusion of being superior and entitled to subordinate others to one's use erodes. That loss of culturally legitimized white supremacy is the volcanic power behind the eruption of rage and hate expressed by followers of Trump during his campaign. The *Pequod's* slow, swirling descent into the depths of the ocean augurs the fate of American society if the victim complex of white supremacists continues to control the ship of state.

The tragic drowning of the captain and crew of the *Pequod* has been interpreted by historian of the American dream, Cal Jillson, who cites Frederic Carpenter before him,<sup>8</sup> as Melville's criticism of the American dream. Both Carpenter and Jillson assert that Melville ascribes Ahab's obsession and his failure to fate (97). Melville's fatalism, Jillson claims, leads to a belief in life's futility. He offers the following text as illustrative of Melville's giving no credence to the hopes of the American dream: "The world's a ship on its passage out. . . . One most perilous and long voyage ended, only begins a second, and a second ended, only begins a third and so on, for ever [sic] and for aye. Such is the endlessness, yea, the intolerableness of all earthly effort." Jillson comments, "So much for the humanism of Jefferson . . ." (97). Melville actually provides conflicting attitudes toward fate and free will in *Moby-Dick* through not only placing various points of view in different characters, but by describing different viewpoints held by the evolving narrator, Ishmael. Ishmael begins his journey in a mood of angry dissatisfaction with life. He explains his decision to take to the sea again as an effort to cope with his foul feelings:

Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth, whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul, whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's



hats off—then I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball. (23)

It was in this self-destructive state of mind that Ishmael voices the words Jillson uses to confirm his belief that Melville is fatalistic. Actually, Ishmael is the character Melville uses to convey hope of an alternative to Ahab's rage.

Before choosing a ship, Ishmael is confronted with a human being who at first glance seems very unlike himself. In a series of humorous chapters, Melville recounts Ishmael's encounter with a cannibal from the South Seas, beginning with Ishmael's finding himself sharing a bedroom and a bed with him. At first Ishmael is terrified of the alien aspect of this stranger covered in tattoos and smoking a tomahawk pipe. Then as he watches him sacrifice a bit of biscuit to his idol, perform his morning ablutions, eat breakfast at a common table, take a calm, after-breakfast smoke, and leaf through a book he apparently could not read, Ishmael, no longer afraid, begins to think this South Sea Islander named Queequeg a fine fellow. He muses to himself:

With much interest I sat watching him. Savage though he was, and hideously marred about the face—at least to my taste—his countenance yet had a something in it which was by no means disagreeable. You cannot hide the soul. Through all his unearthly tattooings, I thought I saw the traces of a simple honest heart; and in his large, deep eyes, fiery black and bold, there seemed tokens of a spirit that would dare a thousand devils. And besides all this, there was a certain lofty bearing about the pagan, which even his uncouthness could not altogether maim. . . . It may seem ridiculous, but [his brow] reminded me of General Washington's head . . . . Queequeg was George Washington cannibalistically developed. (82)

Reflecting on Queequeg's self-sufficiency, Ishmael is moved to admiration, even awe. Calling Queequeg's self-possession "almost sublime," Ishmael thinks, "Here was a man some twenty thousand miles from home, by the way of Cape Horn . . . thrown among people as strange to him as though he were in the planet Jupiter; and yet he seemed entirely at his ease; preserving the utmost serenity; content with his own companionship; always equal to himself" (83). As Ishmael and Queequeg become friends, they decide to ship out together and take a packet schooner to Nantucket to find a ship. On board, while Queequeg smokes his pipe, a country bumpkin makes fun of him behind his back. Queequeg discovers him, picks him up, tosses him in the air, and then taps him so he lands on his feet. The fellow runs to the captain, but as he does so, the rope holding the boom breaks loose, and the swinging boom knocks him overboard. While all on board panic, Queequeg, on his knees, takes a rope, secures it, and lassoes the boom. Then he takes off his shirt, dives into the freezing water, and saves the man who had mocked him. That done, he asks for some water to wash off the brine, returns to his pipe, and "leaning against the bulwarks, and mildly eyeing those around him, seemed to be saying to himself—'It's a mutual, joint-stock world, in all meridians. We cannibals must help these Christians.'" Queequeg's magnanimity models awareness of human interdependence, the awareness and magnanimity missing from the individual pursuit of happiness without regard for others.

Ishmael's gradual transition from terror at the appearance of his strange bedfellow to recognition of him as a man, then as a brave and honest man—then even more than that—as an extraordinarily philosophical man, one who calls up the visage of the first president of the United States, suddenly frees him of his dark mood. He says he “began to be sensible of strange feelings. I felt a melting in me. No more my splintered heart and maddened hand were turned against the wolfish world. This soothing savage had redeemed it” (83). Recognizing the humanity of Queequeg and befriending him transforms Ishmael's misanthropy.

Queequeg also indirectly becomes the means of society's learning about Ahab's tragic enslavement to his victim complex. Before sailing on the *Pequod*, Ishmael attended a sermon on the story of Jonah given by an ex-sailor, Father Mapple, during which Ishmael was taught that a man must speak truth to fulfill God's will and his own life. Ishmael's recounting of the story of the *Pequod*'s journey and destruction is his fulfillment of this injunction. Queequeg is the reason he was able to survive and tell the tale. During the voyage, Queequeg had become ill and ordered that a coffin be made for him. Instead of dying, however, he recalls an undone duty and through strength of character regains his health so that he might perform it. When the ship loses its life-buoy, Queequeg suggests that his coffin be turned into one. Ahab muses on the possibility that a conveyer of the dead might be made into a conveyer of life, but rejects the thought: “A life-buoy of a coffin! Does it go further? Can it be that in some spiritual sense the coffin is, after all, but an immortality preserver? But no. So far gone am I in the dark side of earth, that its other side, the theoretic bright one, seems but uncertain twilight to me” (666–67). After Moby Dick rams the *Pequod*, Queequeg's coffin-life-buoy is ejected from the vortex of the sinking ship. Ishmael grabs onto it and is eventually picked up by a ship looking for a lost child. Through the conveyor of death, the coffin-turned-life-buoy through the character and suggestion of his cannibal friend, Ishmael survives the sinking ship. Because a member of the whaling community, the captain of the *Rachel*, searches for his lost son, Ishmael is picked up and survives being cast adrift in the ocean. Relatedness, interdependence, and care for those in need is Melville's alternative to Ahab's dying locked in a victim complex of vengeful rage. Melville clearly portrays the danger to the collective of psychological entrapment through the character of Ahab, but he also offers a parable of hope through the character of Ishmael.

The characters and fates of Ahab, Ishmael, and Queequeg suggest that the collective response to the rage of Trump's supporters needs first to bring to consciousness the psychological dynamics operating unconsciously in those caught in a victim complex, and second, to explore the changes in attitude and understanding that could help free those so caught. The sense of privileged entitlement to pursue one's happiness at the expense of others requires deepening collective understanding of happiness beyond an ego perspective, that is, beyond the demand to have personal desires satisfied. Religions such as Buddhism teach that living for satisfaction of desires is actually a source of suffering rather than happiness. Having goals that do not suffice to bring happiness, Americans defer happiness, whatever that may be, to the lives of our children generation after generation. Not having achieved happiness, however hard it has been pursued, Americans are vulnerable to scapegoating others for their lack of it, as Trump's supporters scapegoat those who are not white. A more realistic understanding of

happiness requires a less ignorant understanding of psyche. At the least, it requires recognition of the limits of the ego and of ego gratification.

Human freedom is inherently limited psychologically by the power of unconsciousness, including its form as ignorance, to take control of consciousness unbeknownst to the ones being taken over. Mobs offer a familiar collective example. Recognizing that consciousness is subject to possession by aspects of unconscious psyche reveals the terrain in which the possibilities of psychological freedom exist. Becoming aware of unconscious enslavement in a complex, such as a victim complex, for example, is potentially a first step toward breaking free of obsessive emotions such as hatred and vindictiveness. Choices about responses then become possible. That recognition may open the way to a level of psychological freedom enabling a kind of happiness that arises from the experience of meaning, perhaps eventually including the meaning of pursuing the well-being of others as well as of oneself. PI depends upon increased psychological freedom. Pursuit of psychological freedom requires changing one's relationship to the unconscious psyche from being controlled to being nourished by it. Recognizing the nourishing power of the unconscious psyche can help depotentiate a complex. It is through symptoms provided by the unconscious psyche, for example, that one can gradually come to know oneself and thus move from identifying with one's ego ideal to living more authentically as who one is. Thoughts and feelings arising from the unconscious psyche to consciousness can offer freeing insights and life-enriching emotional ties. The greater psychological freedom and fulfillment enabled by these offerings of the unconscious psyche can stir gratitude, a kind of happiness grounded in receptive relationship. The ego's relationship to the unconscious psyche can move from being unconscious captive to conscious beneficiary and willing exponent. That is, the unconscious psyche is thereby provided living manifestation in conjunction with human choice.

Merely naming these ideas does not communicate knowledge of the realities the ideas represent. But at least the concepts can have a public life that individual experience may infuse with meaning. If Jung is correct in claiming that unconsciousness longs for consciousness and that consciousness is nourished by the "deep wells of being" seeking consciousness (CW 5, par. 299), then the surfacing of the victim complex based on the white supremacist individualism embedded in American history can be seen as an opportunity for the nation to deepen its understanding of freedom, happiness, and relatedness. Recognizing the complex potentially serves a collective re-visioning of the American dream.

It is morally obligatory, however, not to equate kinds of victimization. The sense of being victimized because one has lost culturally bestowed privileges to oppress others is not the same as being victimized, for example, by being put into sexual slavery. Both could lead to entrapment in responses characteristic of complexes. But victimization as loss of oppressive privilege requires having its rage and vengeance recognized as in need of moral transformation. As Jung writes, humans are moral by nature: "Moral law is nothing other than an outward manifestation of man's innate urge to dominate and control himself" (CW 4, par. 486.) Victimization caused by oppressive power must be resisted and its destructive effects on victims' psyches addressed.

Addressing the cultural victim complex of Trump's supporters not only has the virtue of seeking a more moral American society; it also promises more psychological freedom for the supporters, themselves. Suffering a complex is a kind of enslavement, much like that suffered by Ahab and his crew. Melville writes: "all the individualities of the crew, this man's valor, that man's fear; guilt and guiltlessness, all varieties were welded into oneness, and were all directed to that fatal goal which Ahab their one lord and keel did point to" (701). Melville specifically refers to this relationship between leader and followers as one of enslavement. He writes: "their hearts were bowled along. The wind that . . . rushed the vessel on by arms invisible as irresistible; this seemed the symbol of that unseen agency which so enslaved them" (700). As portrayed by the *Pequod's* drowning crew and Ahab's crucifixion roped to the diving Moby Dick, being caught in a lust for power dooms the enslaved eventually to being overpowered and dragged to death in unconsciousness. Addressing the cultural victim complex of white supremacists offers them hope of liberation while also focusing all Americans on creating a more moral version of the American dream.

Jung warns of the dangers that arise when a nation relinquishes hopes of its own morality, hopes which for Americans have been manifested in seeking to develop a society in which the equal rights of all people are realized. Jung writes, "We have had bitter experience of what happens when a whole nation finds the moral mask too stupid to keep up. The beast breaks loose, and a frenzy of demoralization sweeps over the civilized world" (CW 5, par. 341). Trump's followers are caught in a victim complex rushing them on an unreasoning mission to support Trump's resurrecting America's founding dominance of propertied white males. In the unpredictable ways of psyche's evolution, the American enactment of free pursuit of one's happiness at anyone's and anything's expense has led to a psychological complex threatening to sink the American ship of state—or to provide the impetus to address the unbridled individualism of the American dream by reconceiving it.

While working at concluding this paper, I had a dream about a "State-of-words." Reflecting on the phrase, I thought of the preamble to the Declaration of Independence as a State of words comparable to the governing state—an imaginal State-of-words. I thought of its declaration of rights defining the dream of America for all people as an imaginal realm demanding to be dreamed on. History reveals that process has been ongoing since the beginning. The covenants of the Puritans and Quakers provided a spiritual background for the version created by Benjamin Franklin through his characters Father Abraham and Poor Richard. As Jillson notes, "Franklin taught personal virtues, but men were to use them in the service of community." (36) Andrew Jackson interpreted the dream so as to extend its promised rights to all white men. Lincoln extended the right to life and liberty to slaves. Social Darwinism, which had no respect for natural rights and equality, gutted the sense of community instilled in the dream by the Puritans and Quakers. After decades of an economy dedicated to the survival of the fittest, Theodore Roosevelt declared that should there be conflict between the rights of property and those of man, the rights of man should prevail (Jillson 163). The suffrage movement led to applying the idea of equal rights to women. Franklin Delano Roosevelt claimed to revise the dream in terms of the then existing economic order. Martin Luther King led a non-violent movement to realize the dream of freedom for black Americans rooted, as he said,

“deeply in the American dream.” After John Kennedy’s assassination, Lyndon Johnson successfully negotiated the promise of equal rights to blacks into law. This evolving re-visioning of the State-of-words of the American dream continues as America changes. The surfacing of the hatred of Trump’s base suffering the victim complex of lost entitlements calls for articulating moral limits to the right of individuals to pursue their happiness. Franklin Delano Roosevelt recognized this need when, discussing the right to pursue happiness, he said that “we know that liberty to do anything which deprives others . . . is outside the protection of any compact” (Jillson, 175). Yet he did not specifically add this recognition to the State of words encapsulated in the Declaration of Independence.

Using the insights gained from Ishmael’s experiences and the suggestion of my dream, that is, insights gained from sources infused by unconscious materials, I suggest the following revision of the imaginal State-of-words of the American dream:

The fifty states proclaim: That all people are created equal, that we as a people are endowed by our human moral imagination with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the individual pursuit of Happiness, providing that pursuit does not harm the rights of any other or the good of all.

There is much in the possible moral imagination of the good society that is not included here, but some key ideas are present. The imaginal state envisioned by that wording places individuals within a context of being a people. It respects the rights to religious beliefs of all by not specifying any. It asserts the role of human imagination in the creation of culture. And it limits individual pursuit of happiness by prohibiting harm to individuals or to the common good. Such a revision of the State-of-words repudiates white supremacists’ ego dream of power over others and frees them of a sense of entitlement to that power. It does so while continuing to embrace the moral dream of justice in the proclamation that all of us share equal rights to life and liberty contained in the original declaration.

In summary, the diminution of the white male supremacy institutionalized during the founding of America underlies the victim complex of Trump’s supporters. Analysis of Ahab’s victim complex and of Ishmael’s survival suggests that part of what is needed to break free of that complex is people befriending the culturally alien other and caring for one another. These realizations call for revising the limitlessness of the individual’s right to pursue happiness as implied in Jefferson’s phrasing of the American dream internalized by subsequent generations. They lead to adding a prohibition of harming others to our understanding of the American right to pursue happiness. That revision introduces the common good to the understanding of the American dream.

### **Contributor**

Inez Martinez, Ph.D., professor emerita of literature, writes psychological criticism of literature. Her publications include studies of literary works by authors illuminating Hero and Beauty archetypes (Radclyffe Hall), the emergence of Self (Kate Chopin), integration of personal shadow (Joseph Conrad), personal transformation of racist cultural shadow (James Baldwin), limitations of ego readings, numinosity in readings, Oedipus’ legacy of

rejecting responsibility, experience of psyche in matter (Isak Dinesen), and a cultural mother complex issuing from slavery (Toni Morrison).

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Thomas Frank's *Listen, Liberal*, which argues that the Democratic Party has abandoned its working-class base.

<sup>2</sup> Mika cites Kimmel's *Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era*, Nation Books, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Edinger's reading of the words "I give up the spear" as a transformative reconciliation of Ahab's ego to the greater Self ignores not only his intention to kill the white whale but also the unrepentant context in which his words are spoken: "Towards thee I roll, thou all-destroying but unconquering whale; to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee. . . . Thus I give up the spear!" Kirsch's move from the text to an analysis of the author represents a methodology that, although widely practiced, I believe flawed. Analyzing a character is possible because the form of the tale is complete and what information that can be known about the character is given. Analyzing an author through readings of his or her texts inflates those texts into a supposed understanding of the mystery of the author's lived life which encompasses much more than his or her writings.

<sup>4</sup> Melville himself began the claim that *Moby-Dick* represented "an elevated aspect of American life" in a letter to his English editor Richard Bentley. (Updike 124).

<sup>5</sup> In the Extracts at the beginning of *Moby-Dick*, Melville includes the following passage from *Obed Macy's History of Nantucket*: "In the year 1690 some persons were on a high hill observing the whales spouting and sporting with each other, when one observed; [sic] 'there—pointing to the sea—is a green pasture where our children's grand-children will go for bread!'" (17).

<sup>6</sup> The critic Wai-Chee Dimock notes the contrast between the Captain of the *Samuel Enderby* and Captain Ahab, but not in terms of contrasting European and American sensibilities. Dimock stresses the other captain's human, reasonable efforts to avoid doom (61).

<sup>7</sup> Rogin credits Gilmore's *The Middle Way: Puritanism and Ideology in American Romantic Fiction*, Rutgers UP, 1977, p. 147.

<sup>8</sup> Jillson cites Carpenter's *American Literature and the Dream*. Philosophical Library, 1955, pp. 74–75.

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## Old Eve



Heather Taylor-Zimmerman

## Soul-Searching at Standing Rock

Jonathan Vaughn

*Abstract:* This paper proposes the existence of two cultural complexes—a Native Complex and a Pilgrim Complex—active in the United States today. Continuously functioning since the nation’s founding, these complexes recently manifested in the #NoDAPL actions at the Standing Rock reservation and can be seen constellating with and in opposition to each other.

*Keywords:* Standing Rock, #NoDAPL, cultural complex, colonialism

Singer and Kimbles (2004) have defined cultural complexes as “an inner sociology” and “a description of groups and classes of people as filtered through the psyches of generations of ancestors” (pp. 4–5). The intergenerational aspect of cultural complexes suggests that they bind us to our forebears and to the lands from which they came and went. Within the United States, two cultural complexes that I have named the “Native Complex” and the “Pilgrim Complex” can be traced to the earliest colonial settlement in New England. They seem to have been continuously active for four hundred years, since at least 1620. Moreover, they share unique qualities and characteristics that bind them closely together. The Native Complex is characterized by the perceived invisibility of indigenous peoples—the combined result of both a forced disappearing imposed by colonizers and a choice by the indigenous to disappear, to become invisible, in order to survive. This complex manifested in the 2016 protests by over 300 Native American tribes at the Standing Rock reservation in North Dakota. The Pilgrim Complex, which opposes the Native Complex, is characterized by a separatist drive that demands freedom at all costs (even death) and justifies destructive, genocidal behavior as a means of preserving colonial culture and community. Both complexes intersect at a place where each group intensely seeks freedom, relevance, and acceptance. By reflecting on these two cultural complexes, a collective remembering process may heal collective wounds and bring about what Kimbles (2000) called “an antidote to cultural invisibility”—a way to find soul in the most intractable places, even in the conflict that unfolded at Standing Rock (p. 165).

### The Complexes Today: #NoDAPL

On one side of the Standing Rock conflict were self-described “water protectors”—American Indian tribal members and elders from over 300 tribes—who were encamped to protest and block drilling of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). On the other side were the private pipeline company (Energy Transfer Partners), their investors, pipeline workers, law enforcement, and the U.S. government (Whittle, 2016; Yardley, 2016).

The 1,772-mile pipeline, or DAPL for short, is a 30-inch diameter steel pipe built across four states to deliver crude oil from the Bakken shale reserves in North Dakota, across South Dakota and Iowa, to a transfer terminal in Illinois (Aisch & Lai, 2016;

Sullivan, 2016). Though largely built on private land and via state powers of eminent domain, the pipeline required permission from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the “Corps”) to cross hundreds of waterways in its path, 22 of which had to be built under bodies of water like Lake Oahe, “a dammed section of the federally regulated Missouri River that provides water for the Standing Rock Sioux” (Aisch & Lai, 2016; Yardley, 2016).

The tribal protests at Standing Rock operated under the Twitter-age banner #NoDAPL, as well as the phrase *Mni Wiconi*, Lakota for “water is life” (Crazy Bull, 2016). The Standing Rock Sioux and their supporters, including other private landowners and citizens nationwide, were angry that a pipeline was being built without their consent (as if they were invisible and irrelevant) across sources of drinking water and in close proximity to sacred burial grounds. Their anger was amplified by the blunt manner in which this massive project unfolded in a swift, 18-month process governed by the Corps’ euphemistically-titled “Nationwide Permit 12”—which authorized such activities as long as they did “not result in the loss of greater than ½-acre of waters of the United States for each single and complete project” (Yardley, 2016). Thus, a new and vital question emerged: “how, they ask, could the Corps view a pipeline’s every impact as a ‘single and complete project’ if it’s only being examined piece by piece” (Yardley, 2016).

Furthermore, in protesting, the water protectors were met with violence on an organized, militarized scale not seen in this country in nearly 50 years. On November 20, 2016, just four nights before Thanksgiving, “police used fire hoses to douse protesters in subfreezing temperatures, sending several to the hospital” (Sullivan, 2016). Surface-to-air missile-launchers were deployed by the North Dakota Army National Guard to the site as late as January 2017 (Axe, 2017). And while a reprieve in the last days of the Obama administration seemed to slow, if not jeopardize, the progress of the pipeline, the Water Protectors’ success was impeded entirely by executive order on the fifth day of the Trump presidency (Baker & Davenport, 2017).

### **A Note on Personal Transference**

Since depth psychological inquiry invites authors to consider their personal transference to the topic, it is relevant to note that I come from a long line of American ancestors that goes back fourteen generations. On my paternal grandfather’s side my twelfth great-grandparents, John Alden and Priscilla Mullins, were on the *Mayflower* and settled the Plymouth colony in what would become Massachusetts. In fact, I am descended from four of the families that formed that community in exile—the Alden, Bradford, Mullins, and Rogers families. One of those Plymouth ancestors—all of whom were saved by the hospitality and care of the Wampanoag tribe native to the region—was Elizabeth Alden Pabodie, who was said to be the first colonial child born in New England (Hagan, 2008, p. 2). Since my ancestors were among the first non-native peoples to populate this land, a Pilgrim Complex is sure to be deeply rooted in me. In naming both of these complexes, noting the good and the bad, I honor the collective memory of my ancestors as well as the peoples who lived here long before them. And in naming and remembering perhaps healing can begin in me and in the culture at large.

### Jungian Complex Theory

Jung (1960/2014b) discovered feeling-toned complexes in his word-association tests while at the Burghölzli hospital in Zurich in the early 1900s (p. 93). Disagreeing with his mentor, Jung declared “the *via regia* to the unconscious” was not the dream, as Freud had declared, “but the complex, which is the architect of dreams and of symptoms” (p. 101). He also noted that this royal road was not so royal after all. Complexes were “more like a rough and uncommonly devious footpath that often loses itself in the undergrowth and generally leads not into the heart of the unconscious but past it” (p. 101).

Jacobi (1959) went on to outline the nature of complexes in more detail. She said that per “Jung’s definition every complex consists primarily of a ‘nuclear element,’ a vehicle of meaning, which is beyond the realm of conscious will, unconscious and uncontrollable” and that associations emerge that link them to the nuclear element or core (p. 8). These associations come from both “innate personal disposition” and “individual experiences conditioned by the environment” (p. 9). While Shalit (2002) wrote that “complexes develop around an archetypal core” (p. 14), Samuels (1985) stated that these cores are comprised of an emotion-perceiving experience and not a prescribed list of qualities or symbolic images (p. 53). Jung (1931/1968a) described archetypes at their simplest as “primordial types” or “universal images” (pp. 4–5). Thus, at their cores, complexes must have some primordial, universal “emotional experience of perception,” as Samuels (1985) put it directly (p. 53).

Jung’s (1960/2014b) extensive research demonstrated that complexes “can have us” or *possess* us, in a more visceral way of thinking of them (p. 96). In fact, they are “autonomous” and behave like “an animated foreign body in the sphere of consciousness,” but they are also “among the normal phenomena of life” (pp. 96, 104). Complexes “lurk as it were in the background of the unconscious” (Jacobi, 1959, p. 10) and act as unconscious contrarians—contrarian, at least from an ego perspective. “Once constellated and actualized, the complex can openly resist the intentions of the ego consciousness, shatter its unity, split off from it” (p. 9). But since complexes are not truly separate or apart from us, they are simply unknown, not negative. In being made known, they emerge from the unconscious shadows. Bringing complexes to consciousness gives them “a better chance of being ‘understood’ and corrected” as well as “transformed,” particularly in the consciousness-making container of the analytic space (p. 11). The key to transformation is the ego. “It is solely the state of the conscious mind, the greater or lesser stability of the ego personality, that determines the role of the complex” (p. 27). How the ego responds determines “whether the conscious mind is capable of understanding, assimilating, and integrating the complex” (p. 27).

Jacobi (1959) asserted that collective complexes pose a greater threat than merely personal ones: “the danger and the corresponding anxiety are greatest when the confrontation is with complexes of the collective unconscious, whose ‘explosive charge’ can act as an earthquake shattering everything around it” (p. 29). A group carries greater psychic energy—and potentially a greater and more damaging charge—than the energy generated by a single individual’s complex. If not brought into consciousness and holistically addressed, such a complex has the potential to wreak widespread distress or devastation. It is this danger, this risk, this potential transformation that is addressed

below, with the overlay of the collective actions of the #NoDAPL movement added onto a cultural complex infrastructure.

### Cultural Complexes

If the individual and the collective exist in psyche, in both conscious and unconscious aspects, then various levels between the individual and the collective must give complexes spaces to form, including at the cultural level. A short summary here of where culture and psyche have intersected in Jungian psychology is worthwhile. Building upon Jung's own amorphous writings about the existence of a cultural level—what he called a “sea of historical associations” (Jung, 1936/1968b, p. 86)—Henderson (1990) recognized a “cultural unconscious,” in a paper originally presented in 1987. In that paper he referred to his evolving idea as “an area of historical memory that lies between the collective unconscious and the manifest pattern of the culture” (p. 10). Later, Samuels (1985) wrote that complexes were “Jung's way of linking the personal and the collective” (p. 47). He stated that complexes result “from the blend of archetypal core and human experience” and also can directly influence memory (pp. 47–48). If complexes are both the combination of archetypal cores and human experience then what of cultural complexes in the experience of people who live and die together? What of those cultural spaces in the autonomous life of complexes?

Singer and Kimbles (2004) notably brought all of this foundational thought into a single volume in their book, *The Cultural Complex*. Kimbles (2000) had earlier stated that complexes can be found in “the group's expectations, its definition of itself, its destiny,” and that we can find cultural complexes at work “in and through the group's fears, enemies and its attitudes toward other groups” (p. 159). Fortunes, fates, faiths, and fears all serve as a sort of collective mirror held up to the group, giving ghostly form to the complexes present. By looking at the cultural life of the collective—its energies, its language, expression, movements, activities, and values—we begin to see into what lies underneath the surface, what lies just past the respectful veneer of attitudes and behaviors that hold societies together.

Looking into the mirror of Western culture broadly, Bernstein (2005) wrote that “as western European man became increasingly separated from his own tribal roots . . . that same rational function took over the process of separating him increasingly from the transrational dimension, becoming an end unto itself” (p. 34). For Western culture, anything that was not rational, including nature, became identified with the irrational and supernatural (or “transrational”): nature itself became the enemy of Western culture and progress (p. 35). Subsequently, Bernstein diagnosed a “fragmentation complex” at the root of the Western European psyche (p. 36). This reality, the very being of such a complex, “is perceived and experienced as a threat to ego survival—a threat to the very survival of the individual . . . a feeling that can leave one in abject terror” (p. 36). And therein are the behaviors of the Western complex: fear, fragmentation, a pervading feeling of dread and horror, shock and awe. If this complex existed in Western culture broadly speaking, then at a certain point it would be related to and would contain each particular *American* cultural complex. The American parts would be contained within the Western whole, and this theoretical place is where we locate at least one of the particular



complexes explored herein, the Pilgrim complex—one layer above the Western fragmentation complex and one layer closer to the individual.

In order to examine the Native and Pilgrim complexes evident in the conflict at Standing Rock, it is important to contextualize the place of the individual within the whole. Kimbles (2000) explained:

Our individual psyches emerge out of the deeper levels of the unconscious and are derived from the collective, communal, and social experiences of humankind. These collective experiences provide at least part of the containers and forms of our individual psychological experiences. They extend backwards into archaic history and forwards into the unknown. None of us are free to step completely outside this river of collective experience. (p. 162)

With respect to psyche, there are no individuals without the influence of the collective, and no collective or cultural level without the actions and reactions of individuals, whether in isolation or in solidarity.

### **The Two Complexes—Pilgrim and Native**

On one side of the events playing out at Standing Rock are peoples, attitudes, and behaviors that mirror complex reactions seen since the first arrival of colonists some 400 years ago. In particular—if we look at the founding of Plymouth, Massachusetts, and the arrival of the *Mayflower*, the famous ship filled with devout, anti-establishment Protestants—we see the beginnings of this cultural complex, the Pilgrim Complex. The Pilgrims sought to establish their own religious practices free from the interference by or the authority of the state. They fled to the shores of the New World as a risky, final attempt to be free. This was their Pilgrim Complex in action, one that we can see reflected, strengthened, and amplified today. The complex demands freedom at all costs, even separation and death. Yet while demanding individuality and freedom from the group, they justified the eradication of groups of Native peoples who stood in their way. This Pilgrim Complex could equally be referred to as the Separatist Complex: The Pilgrims left England as dissenters who wanted to separate themselves from the Church of England.

The Pilgrim Complex speaks to what has been happening since the Pilgrims settled on Wampanoag tribal lands. It was as if they said: *Pretend the Wampanoag do not exist, indoctrinate them, take them in, assimilate them, but do not let them be seen or heard or left to their own devices. If we cannot push them far enough away, if we cannot get rid of them entirely, despite all trying, then let us hide them away, in remote corners.* This ideology was enshrined in Massachusetts colonial law in 1675, which allowed for anyone “that shall finde any Indian travelling or skulking in any of our Towns or Woods... to command them under their Guard and Examination, or to kill them and destroy them as they best may or can” (Lepore, 1998, p. 183). The fragmented—those lonely, forgotten, disconnected, separated—were now doing the fragmenting. Those seeking the right to be separate were now demanding that everyone in their reach be the same, identical, homogeneous. The Pilgrim complex is one of hiding, shadows, obscurity, and of broken promises.

On the other side stand Native Americans, those indigenous to the American continent. Their complex emerges in direct reaction to the destructive, genocidal behavior of the Pilgrims and other colonists. This Native Complex, which started as defense against genocide, may have protected Native Americans from complete annihilation. And those who did survive seemingly disappeared. At first they were intentionally forced to disappear, murdered outright or pushed off of their homelands. And later some survivors also chose to disappear, to render themselves invisible, to assimilate enough to become unnoticeable, and by doing so to ensure their survival. Here the characteristic invisibility of the Native Complex is evident.

The power and reach of this complex can be seen in the popular book *The Last of the Mohicans*, written in 1826, as well as the contemporary movie of the same name (Cooper, 1826/2003; Mann, 1992). The sad irony is that there was no last Mohican, no final man, the last of his kind. The Mohicans survive unto today. Cooper's novel was a cultural lie attempting to obscure the truth because reality was too painful to face, too treacherous to admit. Whereas Pilgrims and other colonizers tried to eradicate the indigenous peoples, the Native Americans survived. As Chingachgook, the father of Uncas, the so-called last of the Mohicans, says at the close of the book, "I am a blazed pine, in a clearing of the pale faces" (1826/2003, p. 363). Chingachgook himself survives and stands alone, "a blazed pine," despite every violent and destructive act by the pale-faced colonists. Even amidst perceived isolation and destruction a tree still grows and thrives. This stark reality counters the malevolent myth that whole tribes of Native peoples simply vanished. They survived despite every attempt to make them disappear, despite every effort to destroy them.

Of course, this complex has been deeply destructive too. Building on the tale above, Native Americans have been forgotten at each step of the American story. The fragmentation and marginalization that began with the Pilgrims have left them at the margins of society and the edge of prosperity. While the young nation of colonists (not just English Pilgrims, but English Anglicans and Catholics, as well as Dutch, German, French, and others) moved on, Native Americans were often left in poverty and despair. Ultimately the desperate and necessary choice to blend in came with a heavy price—the burden of invisibility.

The defensive shell of this complex manifests in modern Native Americans as separateness, as desperate escapism by the young, as awful cycles of poverty and substance abuse that mask the root problems. This defensive, complex behavior was reflected in the words of one Water Protector at Standing Rock: "Back home, it's drugs, alcohol, no jobs. People don't really know how to survive. It's hopeless. All we have left is the river" (Wong, 2016).

The theory of historical trauma—"a legacy of chronic trauma and unresolved grief across generations"—explains these cyclical, defensive behaviors that vex Native communities (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998, p. 60). The trauma of the violence against the Native Americans is what seems to be most invisible, and herein lies the reason this complex keeps feeding and growing. The violence began early. Lands were often acquired through seizure, treachery, or violence. And no matter how the land was acquired, property was often so cherished by the colonists that they put their own families in harm's way in extreme efforts to preserve prized property. As Lepore (1998) noted,

“this kind of attachment was not at all uncommon,” as was the case with the colonist Thomas Wakely and his family in 1675 (p. 76). Native blood was spilled over land, over colonial desires for possession and consumption, over an uncontrollable appetite for resources. Loss was constant: loss of family, land, home, familiarity, culture, and even historical evidence of their very existence and survival. This trauma, this loss, did not stop with the first violent strike. The trauma has persisted since Plymouth, continued with the 100-year-old policy of forcing Native American children to attend government boarding schools (which did not end until the 1970s), and it persists in many aspects of Native life today (Fortunate Eagle, 2002, p. 18). The trauma is pervasive even as the violence against them continues to be perpetuated.

What are a people supposed to do when in the grips of such a collective complex? How should they behave? I suggest that the answer is memory. Collective remembering is the path to wholeness.

### **Analysis: #NoDAPL and the Complexes in Conflict**

The archetypal cores at the center of each complex—Pilgrim and Native, as they constellate around and in tension with one another—are similar. Each one displays dual aspects: the fear of invisibility combined with the desire for freedom. At that core rests a common need for acceptance as well as a need to define what is sacred and holy. In fact, both groups seem to express universal fears of invisibility, of being without voice or power, alongside an intense need to be free, truly free, whether Native or Pilgrim, Wampanoag or white, Standing Rock Sioux or Bakken pipeworker. Indeed, because their complex behaviors so closely mirror and interact with each other, it may be possible after 14 generations that these two complexes are now fused into a single complex. Yet this possibility would need to be the basis of a broader and deeper study, as noted below.

The Pilgrims themselves feared being rendered powerless by those in power in England. Their separation and isolation was clear when William Bradford wrote, on that first morning in the New World, that “they had now no friends to welcome them nor inns to entertain or fresh their weatherbeaten bodies; no houses or much less towns to repair to, to seek for succor” (as cited in Philbrick, 2006, p. 46). After they were exiled themselves, the exiled—the separated Pilgrims—became the exilers, demanding homogeneity even by means of violence. Native Americans continue to fear their forced invisibility too. LaNada Boyer, a Shoshone-Bannock protestor at the Indian occupation of Alcatraz in 1969, said, “It was like we were an invisible people. They recognized everyone else, but they never recognized the Indian people—it was like we were a part of a museum” (Johnson, 1997, p. 11). While exiled to reservations, Native Americans seek heterogeneity in order to preserve their way of life and accept separation from the whole of the United States so as not to be devoured by it. And the defensive, isolating behaviors that emerge further enrage and re-engage the homogenizing, violent complex opposing them. Thus, the cycle of these entwined complexes starts all over and repeats again and again.

Returning to contemporary events at Standing Rock, the disregard shown to the people (whose land and water was in the path of profit) is evident. Two facts are particularly telling: the seizure of land by invoking eminent domain—200 parcels in Iowa alone (Aisch & Lai, 2016). And then there is the fact that the legally questionable review



process by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers required consideration of the pipeline, as Yardley (2016) noted, to be made “piece by piece” (Yardley, 2016). As he explained:

Rather than broadly examining the impact a major pipeline could have across its length, looking at cumulative effects on water, air quality, land and animal species or the climate-changing emissions a pipeline might enable, the Corps typically assesses big pipelines as a series of much smaller ones, sometimes hundreds of smaller ones—breaking them up into segments to be reviewed at specific water and wetland locations.

In considering these in pieces rather than as a single pipeline the Corps of Engineers was contending with the core of its own Pilgrim complex: the Corps itself was fragmented, as was its process. The individuals involved were caught up in the complex. And in return the Army literally fragmented the review process, against any sane or rational explanation of the total impacts on wildlife, water, or other natural resources. Yes, the process was itself a bureaucratic strategy to complete the project, but it was reflective of deeper, underlying traits and patterns of behavior that are historically familiar. The people of the Corps were so attached to land and property (much of it seized through the power of eminent domain) that they once again revealed the colonial Pilgrim attitude of valuing property over life and free will, especially as it pertained to the Standing Rock Sioux. Thus, the Corps seems to have embodied the hatred of nature endemic in the Western European psyche.

The fact that the breadth of this fragmented process is so obfuscated—by bureaucracy and secrecy—reinforces the power of the Pilgrim Complex at work here, as well as the Western fragmentation that lies, even more powerfully, underneath it. There is no clarity, to date, as to how many pieces resulted when the Corps carved up the 1,172-mile pipeline. The level of the fragmentation is undistinguishable, which is a terrifying thought psychologically. How could a project of such scale, one that crosses some 200 waterways, be so diminished, so trivialized as insignificant and even failsafe (Colwell, 2016)? Is extracting such a finite resource so important? What costs are too great to justify the opportunity and the destruction created along the way? Ultimately consideration of the pipeline seems to come down to the independence of a people to decide their own fate and to choose their own destiny, in a system that values fairness and order for all. The goal of this analysis is not to value or devalue the economic worth of the pipeline as a whole. The aim is to bring light to the peoples and the cultures in conflict. At work in this tale are recurring patterns of behavior, seemingly induced by complex dynamics, which have wreaked havoc and violence for centuries. Only if the violent totality of 400 years of history is confronted will healing be possible.

Considering the behavior of the Corps and of the DAPL owners (Energy Transfer Partners) and their disregard for life, safety, and security, the age-old complex pattern can be seen re-emerging. Once again the fragmented are now doing the fragmenting. Like their Pilgrim forebears before them, they are perpetuating a cycle of fragmentation, destruction, and annihilation, and they are further preventing integration and wholeness.

The ramifications in terms of psyche, on the collective level of psyche in particular, seem to be significant. It seems as if assimilation and integration are actively being prevented. The efforts of consciousness, of remembering the long history of colonization, are seemingly being thwarted; instead unconsciousness is being

encouraged. In short, active repression seems to be at work. And with repression comes the dangerous threat of a violent reaction. Jung (1945/2014a) told us that the more negative the conscious attitude “the more repulsive, aggressive, and frightening is the face which the dissociated content assumes” (p. 342). The implications are frightening: without consciousness-making efforts, efforts to prevent further fragmentation, an even more violent reaction awaits—an enantiodromia, a violent swing in an opposing direction. Would this reaction be one that emerges from Native Americans or from elsewhere within the culture? Would such a reaction emerge from Mother Nature herself, whose resources are being ripped from her without regard to the consequences? Of course, there is no definitive way to know: we only know that to watch such violent fragmentation occur is to encourage psychological disaster at a minimum.

Amidst the millions of people impacted by this pipeline’s construction, the Standing Rock Sioux had been ignored and rendered invisible until they bravely demanded to be heard, even in the face of violence. The collective actions of the 300 tribes that stood with the Standing Rock Sioux confronted the invisibility that has plagued all Native Americans for centuries. But even now they risk being relegated to the margins, ignored, and silenced yet again, for the threats are real and sustained.

In January 2017, under executive order, the DAPL construction was expedited and by June of the same year crude oil began to flow (Brown, 2018). Yet in just six months of operation the pipeline leaked five times across four states, and its sister pipeline, the Energy Transfer Crude Oil pipeline, which transfers the oil from the DAPL terminal in Illinois to the Gulf Coast refineries, leaked three times (Brown, 2018). The fears of the Standing Rock Sioux and the additional 300 tribes have already come to pass.

As Chief Arvol Looking Horse (2018), the 19th Keeper of the Sacred Bundle and spiritual leader of the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota people, has written, “Standing Rock is everywhere . . . . What happened at Standing Rock has awakened many of my own people, and people across the world.”

### **Concluding Thoughts and Opportunities**

Fortunately, the sheer enormity of cultural complexes illuminates a way for us to contend with them: “they require a collective response” that must include “collective memory” as an “antidote to cultural invisibility”: “the good, the bad, and the traumas must be worked with in order to sustain and give grounding to culture and individual identity” (Kimbles, 2000, pp. 163, 165, 167). Active remembrance and speaking the truth are the keys. Greater consciousness is being brought by the Native Americans by their actions at Standing Rock, but greater consciousness is still needed by all, including the descendants of the Pilgrims and the other peoples that colonized this land. Given the state of the world, this battle is likely only the beginning in a long, painful, very disruptive struggle for the future.

Despite the ongoing threats and dangers, hope remains, for awareness and consciousness have emerged. Yet memory alone is ineffectual without action, without substantive changes to the behaviors that have sustained these complexes for centuries. Memory is meaningless in the face of global climate destruction—wrought by the reliance on fossil fuels, as described above—unless such memory is accompanied by actions that will bring peoples and cultures together and will point them collectively

toward a sustainable future. Here there is hope that the actions at Standing Rock will lead to “ideas on how to move toward sustainable living in our relationship to land, water, and food” (Looking Horse, 2018).

Vocational opportunities for depth psychologists seem numerous. Beyond the ongoing need for clinical, therapeutic work, these two cultural groups need to talk about the emergent issues together. Dream circles and imaginal group work with both Native and non-Native peoples could help bring everyone into the same safe space to encounter the collective unconscious and to tackle the painful, difficult issues described above. Additional opportunities exist at the research level as well: it is entirely possible that the two complexes described here, once separate and distinct, have coexisted for so long that they have become one enmeshed complex, like subatomic particles linked by a common nucleus, by a complex archetypal core—one that equally fears invisibility and yearns for freedom. After 400 years and 14 generations, perhaps they are now so co-dependent, so fundamental to the other, that they should be considered as one cultural complex. The implications of such a phenomenon could be enormous and should be explored further.

Ultimately much more can and should be written about the full truth of our nation’s founding and the violence it imposed on Native peoples. Educational efforts are critical because all sides of the story must be heard, the good along with the bad, the frightening, and the awful. Education is fundamental to memory and to the process of remembering. History is particularly significant in these educational efforts, while the studies of literature, art, politics, law, and other disciplines are helpful as well. The efficacy of all such educational efforts hinges on presenting and remembering all aspects of our past, not just one side’s viewpoints or opinions—not just the colonizers’ stories—but the unvarnished perspectives of every possible side. The truth needs to be spoken and heard, for the violence did not end centuries ago: Standing Rock is proof that the suffering continues to be sustained here and now.

Because the Pilgrim Complex is deeply rooted in me, I have my own work to continue, my own questions to ask: What do I fail to see or know about the power and effects of this complex? Does it so possess me that I am still unable to see the damage of my actions or of my own ancestors? What am I unable to see or know of the Native American experience or of the Native complex? All of these questions linger. When I allow these questions to remain—to pervade my views of our country, our culture, and our world—surely I am starting to make room for consciousness. Hopefully this constant questioning creates space for the transcendent function to work, to facilitate in me what von Franz (1978/1995) said was “a transition from one attitude to another” (p. 83). Yet I do not exist alone in a cultural complex, and I must engage with others in my culture and in other cultures to ensure that any destructive effects are disempowered and mitigated.

Ultimately complexes are powerful, autonomous aspects of psyche that live not only in individuals but also in groups. To allow them to be integrated successfully, consciously—to give them space to cohabitate with ego and all the other host of complexes that live in us as individuals and as a collective—requires that we honor them publicly, as a group, and memorialize how we came to embody them, for better and for worse. This difficult collective act requires bringing the truth out into the light of day and speaking it with honor, dignity, and respect for all who have come before us, Native and non-Native alike. Only then do we have any hope of saving this place we collectively call

home, not only Turtle Island—the Native name for North America—but for all of *Unci Maka*, the Lakota name for Grandmother Earth (Crazy Bull, 2016).

### Contributor

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**Black Snakes (series)**







Gelareh Khoie



## ***House of Cards*: Reflection on Dark Eros as Creative Action**

Joli Hamilton

**Abstract:** This essay turns a depth-psychological lens upon the drug abuse, sexual manipulation, and murder scenes in the American television rendition of *House of Cards*. The Underwoods, who are obsessed with power, yet strangely enticing, invite the viewer to upend their moralistic perspective challenging notions of innocence and evil. By applying post-Freudian Lacan's Phallus theory, the unconscious and persistent desire for power in some individuals is explored. Then, in a move toward understanding why audiences flock to such grotesque imagery, post-Jungian Moore's notion of dark eros is extended to argue for the necessity of accepting the sadistic aspect of psyche. The notion of libertine consciousness is used to illuminate why the darkness draws us in even as it is repulsive and suggest the cautious, reflective digestion of these grotesque images as a creative action for those challenged by current political darkness. Bringing Lacan and Moore into dialogue, it is suggested that sexually toned darkness may necessarily balance the pull toward light aspects of psyche. Through close reading, intense scenes are reimagined as more than just Jungian shadow material. They also illustrate the sacrifice of innocence required as one attempts to increase consciousness.

**Keywords:** *House of Cards* (TV program), dark eros, psychological image, sadism

### **Introduction**

The American television series *House of Cards*, created by Beau Willimon, offers a dark image through which I intend to explore a fresh perspective on Lacan's concept of the Phallus. The darkness depicted in the fictionalized contemporary political atmosphere will also allow me to extend post-Jungian scholar Moore's notion of dark eros, or the Sadeian consciousness, to the series. An unflinching examination of *House of Cards*' grotesque imagery persuades depth psychologists of the necessity of sadism. The ruthless, sadistic behavior we watch episode after episode becomes more than cheap entertainment when viewed through these depth-psychology perspectives. Through a direct viewing of the grotesque, one may potentially find a protection from psychological naiveté; rather than turning away from the shadowed aspects of humanity, one is drawn closer to darkness. This paper invites a psychological contemplation of the underbelly of life, and specifically American presidential politics. I contend that there is something to be gained, psychologically, from viewing dark eros, perhaps even evil, on the screen, if one engages in a reflective practice, extending the imagination to more fully grasp the potential good and harm to be found in real-life politics. In other words, a stretching of the imaginal capacity is argued to be a necessary task in the current political climate, which is highly divisive and rich with opportunities for power to be exploited. To become

responsible, engaged citizens in what can easily be termed dark times, it is suggested that a turn towards the grotesque image rather than away from it is preferable. Additionally, engaging with the dark image in a creative way is proposed as a potentially nurturing act of self-care on an individual level.

### **Relentlessly Seeking the Phallus**

Before delving into specific images from *House of Cards* it is necessary to grasp the idea of the Phallus established by psychoanalytic theorist Lacan. The Phallus is an idea of power and potency so encompassing that it can only be understood in what Lacan terms the realm of the Imaginary, where sensory perceptions and linguistic structures combine to create the opportunity to form subjectivity. The Imaginary realm predates a child's language acquisition, when concepts must begin taking shape in order for the infant to recognize its being. As ideas are formed the child eventually brings its inner world into relation with the outer by accessing what Lacan calls the Symbolic realm. In the Symbolic realm the signifiers (representations of things) become useful by being linked to signifieds (the ideas themselves) (Bailly, 2009, p. 92). When this linkage occurs, the child accepts the initiation into a world beyond the Imaginary. The Subject, a distinct aspect of being, separate from the ego, is born (Bailly, 2009, p. 96). Bailly (2009) wrote: "The completion of the individual's initiation into the Symbolic comes with the acceptance of the Name-of-the-Father, and of castration" (p. 97). As will soon be demonstrated, the central character in *House of Cards* appears to have been unable to complete this psychological task, thus consigning his Subject to a limbo state.

Coming to terms with the Phallus is a psychological task of initiation into the realization of one's lack of power. Not to be confused with the literal penis, the Phallus is a signifier; it is that which the small child painfully recognizes as having won his mother's attention. When the mother pulls her away from the baby, he is left to piece together what could possibly draw her attention from him. In these first experiences of duality (mother is here, mother is gone) the infant is left to imagine what thing might be powerful enough to compel her absence from him. This what-ever-it-might-be Lacan names the Phallus; it takes on the primary importance for the child-self. Lacan proposes that desiring the Phallus grips one in an irrational trajectory of action, a pattern of attempts to be something that is not attainable because does not exist in reality. The Phallus is what is always sought but cannot ever be found, invested with a profound amount of imagined power. According to Lacanian theory, the entirety of a life can be spent searching in vain for that which has captured and held the mother's attention unless the castration complex is successfully negotiated. In other words, the child must renounce their attempt to be or have what the mother seeks or forever consign part of his attention to the unconscious search for the Phallus. The castration complex for Lacan is the symbolic relinquishing of the desire to be the omnipotent one. Here it becomes possible to see how the massive drive of presidential candidacy *could* possibly stem from an unsuccessful castration complex. Though American presidents do not actually gain omnipotence, the holder of the office is granted social status as the most powerful person in the free world.

*House of Cards* illustrates what a constant search for a level of power only possible in the Imaginary realm might look like, thus portraying what dangers might lie

down such a path. In *House of Cards*, the main characters, Francis and Claire Underwood, exemplify Lacan's Phallus-seeking outcomes in their egregious actions, seemingly willing to sacrifice anything on the altar of power. Each grows increasingly driven and more terrifying in their attempts to obtain this elusive, perfect object. Power-seeking consumes all, an unconscious desire projected onto real objects over which they can hold dominion. Unlike our typical sense of the word penis, Lacan's Phallus is psychologically present in both genders. Residing in Lacan's realm of the Imaginary, it is the signifier (a sound-image that carries an idea) associated with the perfect object baby desires to own in order to regain control of the mother. The Phallus cannot be obtained, nor can the child become the Phallus—it exists only as a psychological structure (Bailly, 2009, p. 75). Complicated images of sex and gender are depicted in *House of Cards*, demonstrating that contemporary fiction is gaining traction with gender-bending scripts. The psychological impact of de-literalized gender is significant. Loosening of the stricter gender roles imposed upon previous generations as well as increased diversity among erotic plotlines is evidence of a psychological shift in the modern American culture. As the penis gains some neutrality as a sexual object desired by both genders, it may be possible that the Phallus can be portrayed more precisely—less entanglement with the biological object could allow new consciousness around sexual appetites. Lacan (1977, p.142) asserted, “the motives of the unconscious are limited...to sexual desire,” and thus, the goal of a therapeutic analysis is to bring desire to consciousness, to admit and name the desire. This moves the person in question from the Imaginary to the Symbolic realm—the step Lacan suggests is necessary for psychological maturation. In this attempt, Francis and Claire fail. There is no psychological movement away from the Phallus. They see only power; Frank and Claire cling to their unconscious desire, never allowing language to give psychological birth to the new thing. “In naming it, the subject creates, brings forth, a new presence in the world” (Lacan, Miller, & Tomaselli, 1988, pp. 228-229). The characters do not successfully bring consciousness to their desire, sublimating it still further as they use anything, even each other, as stepstools to the top of the political heap. Thus all their mighty effort is converted into little if any, apparent psychological development.

Francis's and Claire's bodily sexual desires, quite different from the psychological desire for the Phallus also seem reflective of Lacan's theory: Frank appears to be sexually stimulated only when he is manipulating that which he holds as the Phallus—never for love, somatic connection, or soul-fulfilling purposes. The latter only confound him and result in an impotent reaction on Frank's part. Sexual desire for his conventionally attractive wife only bares Francis's impotence to our sight; power compels all of his attention. In other words, because he has not successfully transitioned to a mature psychological state, unconscious desire for the Phallus is the primary motive for Francis's action. Their needs to merge with the Phallus, identify with it completely, permits both Francis and Claire to engage in numerous depraved acts, from coercive sex to murder, despite a concurrent need to present a perfect persona, or mask, to the world. I question an apparent ethical anomaly that occurs in the viewer of *House of Cards*: despite morally repugnant behavior on both of their parts, we the viewers frequently, if subtly, root for Francis and Claire's general success. One might say that this is only a desire to see the series carry on, but perhaps it is our own psychological needs that are being mirrored.

As part of a long tradition of attractive villains, the Underwoods compel us to consider darkness again and again. In subtly taking the side of evil, might we nurture our own repressed selves as projected onto Francis and Claire? The surname Underwood reinforces this dark potential, pointing toward the shadow quality of Frank and Claire. So too does a common Internet meme born of the series that reads: “One nation, Underwood”. Knowing that murder, betrayal, and lascivious power drove the fictional Underwood White House did nothing to curb the darkly comical line from its popularity. The meme implied that an Underwood presidency would be preferable to either of the two major political candidates in 2016. If an election is understood to be a psychological reflection of the nation at large, the willingness to accept a power-obsessed and manipulative leader might have pointed to an unconscious desire shared by the populace. The collective cries for more Underwood may have been expressing an infantile hope to *become* the omnipotent nation Americans long to be. Individually, this overwhelming yet repressed desire for power might be teased out through an introspective viewing of the dark images in *House of Cards*. The loathsome gods depicted by Francis and Claire might instruct us to face and embrace that power-hungry aspect within, to keep our most devilish drives within view in the hope that we might balance that energy with our better angels.

### Power Seeking

Power for power’s sake is at this point a familiar trope. Thus it is unsurprising that in Chapter 2 Frank Underwood disparages lobbyist Remy Danton, “He chose money over power—in this town, a mistake nearly everyone makes.”<sup>1</sup> Money is the McMansion in Sarasota that starts falling apart after 10 years. Power is the old stone building that stands for centuries.” He continues to drive his point hard: “I cannot respect someone who does not see the difference.” The Underwoods will continue their united and individual crusades for power for years to come as we watch, expending every resource at their disposal in a singular direction. The illustration of such relentless work is worthy of attention. The psychological impetus to power above all other desires is starkly depicted in *House of Cards*, yet the power-seeking seems to be an unquenchable thirst. Five seasons pass with no sign of satisfaction on the part of Francis or Claire. Though neither character lacks creativity in their search for power, nothing seems to fill the desire gap. Thus Lacan’s Phallus contention seems quite a suitable psychological lens through which to understand the particular type of seeking the Underwoods are engaged in. When someone compelled by the search for the Phallus occupies the White House, perhaps the citizen must shift to a more creative stance.

Francis carries the nickname Frank out in the political arena, an ironic moniker since he is constantly hiding the truth. Frank is on an unending quest for power, which he initially asserts will be attained when he achieves the role of president. Soon it is clear that nothing will fulfill Frank’s desire and one has to wonder what level of political dominion over the world he will reach during his quest. Though it never slakes his longing, the pretension of authority must stand in for Frank’s psychological desire to *be* power. No amount of action is too much work, and no act is too depraved for him so long as it moves him in the direction of wielding more power. Only inaction is disgusting to Frank, “I’ve always loathed the necessity of sleep. Like death, it puts even the most powerful men on their backs” he says in Chapter 23; not even bodily function is worthy

of a break in the search for the Phallus in Frank's view. Here we have an example of the Phallus—something so precious it is imbued with symbolic qualities and so unobtainable that it exists only in the realm of the Imaginary. In this case Imaginary is neither fictitious nor unreal; it is the realm of all that is illusory in nature but which has impact upon reality. Lacan points out that the Phallus is trapped in the Imaginary, or the identification of the specular image of oneself (Evans, 1996, p. 142). The Imaginary Phallus ought to evolve into what Lacan would term the *l'objet petit a*, or object-cause-of-desire, if one negotiates the castration complex successfully. However, the completion of the castration complex requires that one give up identifying with the Phallus—in other words, one must renounce the desire to be what one cannot be, the object of the mother's need. Frank is utterly in the grip of his incomplete castration, as illustrated in his acts of wretched violence in his quest for power. Beginning war, committing murder, and manipulations of every type appear reasonable actions to him; psychologically his devotion to his unconscious quest outweighs any moral stricture. This devotion to the Phallus appears in Frank as malignant narcissism, which is a state where all investments are for the ego, regardless of any cost to the remainder of psyche. Lacan posits that narcissism is an unavoidable pathology resulting when the castration complex is not completed (1994, pp. 208-209). Frank demonstrates that he has fallen prey to this devilish outcome. He cannot relate to the Object as other, because he does not properly relate to his own Subject. In other words, because Frank never came to relate to himself as a Subject, he cannot by extension relate to others as Object (Freud, 1989, pp. 545-546). Frank is unable to relate to the Other in any meaningful way, unwilling to submit to the rules and laws of society. This makes him a thoroughly frightening leader. Even within his marriage to Claire, whom he is ostensibly in love with, Frank is alone psychologically. The movement towards the imaginary power overrules any vow or promise he has made; nothing is perceived as more valuable than the Phallus. Despite 25 years of co-creating their powerhouse, Francis shows that he can relinquish not one inch of power in favor of Claire's agenda or needs.

Frank's thirst for power seems unquenchable. Each time he grows closer to his stated goal he finds yet another level of power must be sought. This demonstrates the crusade of the adult unable to relinquish the imaginary Phallus. Bailly (2009) explained: "Castration is the acceptance that one is less-than-perfect, limited, not all powerful or able to control or satisfy the world." He elaborated, "Castration is therefore a symbolic process, which allows the child to situate itself within the Law, and to accept that its own desires are not paramount" (p. 80). Frank refuses to be subject to anything or anyone, even the law of the very land he seeks to lead. As a member of Congress, nor as head of state, Frank will not bow to the law. In fact, he seems to value infinitely increasing power over order and patriotism. In a fictional setting, this trait is discomforting. With its current president taking a similar tone regarding power acquisition, America is experiencing the reality of this psychological principle in action. With years remaining in this presidential term, now is the time to explore the uses of psychological theory to navigate during times of immature leadership.

### **Sadism as Psychological Necessity**

Francis and Claire are Willimon's artistic representation of sadism. Put differently, Frank and Claire can be seen to derive pleasure, with the connotation of

sexuality, from the inflicting of pain. Sadism is not vilified here, however, but is presented as a necessary counterpart to innocence. Jung conceived of wholeness as encompassing the dichotomy of innocence (purity) and evil (shadow) (1959/1990, p. 215, [CW 9 pt.1, para. 396]). Assuming an attitude friendly to libertine values, which lean towards appearing evil, provides a useful, albeit jarring, upending to the moral *zeitgeist*. The term libertine here deserves some attention; it carries with it certain connotations that make it particularly suitable for application to *House of Cards* as a text. A libertine refers to one who is morally loose, particularly in sexual and religious matters. In *Dark Eros* (1990) Jungian analyst and cultural critic Moore calls the dark, sexually toned, evil-seeming aspect of psychology the “Sadeian consciousness”, after the Marquis de Sade and alternately refers to this particular style of consciousness as “libertine nature” (p. 9). Through an examination of Sade’s thousands of pages of lurid fiction, Moore provides a very unusual perspective from which we can understand our own attraction to the Underwoods. “Morality is complex, full of shadows of uncertainty,” wrote Moore (1990), providing a window into the depraved desires of humankind, rejecting the simplicity of moralism for the nuanced imagination of polytheistic psychology (p. 12). Eros is sometimes presented synonymously with libido or life-energy, but in this lack of specificity, eros suffers. What of the inevitable death that awaits us all, the reality of which commands our attention even in the face of our happiest moments? Perhaps the darkness as depicted sexually speaks directly to our eventual decay, and no amount of light will make up for submitting to the dark. A common tendency is to search for the transformative and the wholeness in psychological language, and in this way, the darker aspects of humans are sometimes left in the shadows of the shadows. Eros must maintain its sexual connotation, for instance, as well as the connection to the body. C. G. Jung even seemed a touch leery of Eros’ fullness, saying, “Eros is a questionable fellow and will always remain so. . . he belongs on one side to man’s primordial animal nature which will endure as long as man has an animal body” (1953/1977, p. 28, [CW 7, para. 32]). Jung has here noticed the dark, fecund, underworld aspect of eros, yet the stuffy attitude of the Swiss psychologist’s writings makes it difficult for the modern person to connect with this inherent darkness without a text such as *House of Cards*. When it comes to fully exploring the indomitable evil that lurks in the shadow of the human soul, fiction may just serve its finest purpose.

Thankfully, Sade suffered no such aversion to the perverse attitude eros frequently assumes, and by drawing upon his fiction as well as Moore’s analysis of it we can find the psychological depth in an utterly modern text. In his immense body of work, which centers on the libertine philosophy, Sade disturbs the typical moralistic standpoint. A libertine is one who senses the full potential of rules and structure; that is rules not just in service to public welfare, but as tools to gain power and to experience any and all pleasure desired. Moore (1990) unpacks this unusual consciousness, “to ‘own’ the libertine, and not just girlishness [virtue], implies that one can transcend the boundaries of morality and propriety that give the ego a certain effective, yet narrow, supporting structure” (p.43). In other words, bucking societal oppression in the name of pleasure leads to shocking sexual exhibitions and violent debauchery in Sade’s fiction, and this dark power exchange may be frightening if we confuse the image of sadism with sadistic actions. It is tempting to reject the libertine perspective out of hand for its unfathomable cruelty. But Moore also points out: “A perverted image has the power to turn *us* upside

down, forcing us to consider experience from an inverted perspective.” Taking us further into the potential of Sadeian consciousness he continues, “This may be a disorienting and painful experience, but if nothing else it does offer a fresh point of view” (1990, p. 105). In light of contemporary ecological, political, and cultural problems a fresh perspective should be a welcome thing. In the current political situation, for example, many American citizens claim to feel disempowered and unrepresented by elected officials. In such a state, a creative action originating from within remains within reach. Put differently, in the face of seemingly untenable leadership, perhaps the citizens themselves are turned upside-down, thus rendering the world from a fresh perspective. Although this is likely to feel disturbing, the inversion offers a new element into what may have seemed an implacable set of problems.

It has long been said that there are two things no one wants to see being made, laws and sausages. In *House of Cards*, we devour images of libertine indulgences, digesting the perverse, immoral image of Frank’s law-making without turning away. Even The Underwoods most disgusting acts draw us in; why do we not wish for their failure? Moore may be pointing the way: we know we must be flipped upside down in order to gain a full appreciation for the complexities of life. We experience pleasure in our inversion; Frank’s perverse sexual interests illustrate the underbelly we must not reject:

Chapter 7: Zoe is speaking on the phone to her father, meeting her obligation for Father’s Day. Frank begins stripping off her panties, pushes her onto her back, and descends to pleasure her orally. She struggles to get off the phone before Frank gets her off. As she hangs up the phone she says, “Happy Father’s Day,” and Frank looks up from between her legs. In a gravel-voice, he intones, “Aren’t you gonna wish me a happy Father’s Day?” Zoe replies, “You don’t have any children.” Turning his attention back to his pleasurable task he says, “Don’t I?” and the sadistic, sexually libertine overtones are unmistakable.

Moore (1990), taking the Sadeian perspective, says, “The moment we cease identifying with the innocent puella [innocent], we lose a certain basis for self-worth” (p. 42). But he is not suggesting that we attempt to maintain our posture of innocence. Instead, we must “transcend the boundaries of morality and propriety . . . cultivate a new attitude where honesty of intention and genuine power might coexist” (p. 43). It is a mistake, in other words, to assume that innocence ought to be favored over all else, yet we fall into this habit of thinking precisely because those in power (the church, governmental bodies, even therapeutic traditions) have a vested interest in keeping their power through this dangerous innocence identification. To put it another way, a person, like Frank, who wishes to keep control of a population is motivated to increase the illusion of virtue and innocence as desirable values, qualities to which their constituents must strive, thus rendering their control ever more powerful.

### **Lacan and Moore in Dialogue**

Much can be gained by bringing the post-Freudian Lacan and post-Jungian Moore into dialogue. Lacanian psychoanalytic theory claims that desire structures the unconscious and sexuality underpins all human drives (Lacan, 1977, p. 142) is not so far

away from Moore's archetypal claim that we must contemplate the necessity of dark sexuality and the implications of ignoring the perverse sexual imagination (1990, p. 4). Indeed Moore says, "sexuality is the raw material of one of the most potent mythologies of today" (1990, p. ix). Although there are marked differences in Lacanian and Jungian theory each explores the phenomenon of sexual fantasy as a potential source of psychological insight. Further, the serious study of sexuality as phenomena has gained traction in the public arena over the past several decades, creating an avenue for depth-psychological insights to reach modern audiences. In other words, television imagery is an accessible format through which to propose that the public take up the task of introspective soul-making. Examining specific images from *House of Cards* the underworld and eros are revealed as inherently connected aspects of psyche. For instance, Claire will harness the power of sexual response when she feels objectified, turning its underworld darkness into a protective cloak:

Chapter 6: On his deathbed, the former head of Frank's detail, Steve, makes a private confession to Claire. He says he's been thinking about what he never said, what he never did. He says he hates her husband. She replies that many people do. Steve continues his expunging, croaking that he was always watching Claire, always protecting her, wishing for . . . Claire responds in a measured voice that her husband won her heart by being "the only one who understood me, the only one who knew that I didn't want to be coddled and put on a pedestal." Then, in a turn toward the libertine attitude, she kneels next to him and says, as she reaches under the sheets to fondle his near-dead member, "is this how you wanted it, the way you wanted it? My husband is a man who knows how to take what he wants." With that, she stands. "You told me your truth, now you know mine."

Dark eros has psychologically protective potential if not rejected wholesale for its inability to meet the popular moral standards of society. Cautious psychological exploration of evil must not be literally enacted but instead be embraced as part of the work necessary to become increasingly aware beings. Claire and Francis are willing to live with a foot in the light and one in the dark, no compunctions. Morality for its own sake is explicitly called into question when Francis speaks directly to the camera and explains: "In politics, you either eat the baby or you are the baby." He will only get more repulsive from there, eschewing morality entirely in favor of the Phallic desire. Francis moves toward the Phallus with no hesitation, allows no moralistic doubt to defile his libertine quest for power, while we must find ways to live moral lives without repressing the desire for this cannibalistic devouring power that lives within.

### **Dark as Necessary Counterpart to Light**

Americans have traditionally had a penchant for demanding that their politicians present personas of perfection and light while at the same time requiring them to participate in the underworld of sensationalistic media and unchecked capitalistic machinery in order to be elected (Schenk, 2012). The 2016 presidential elections are either the exception to prove that rule or a shift in American culture, time will tell. When Francis and Claire are subjected to this paradoxical system, they answer it with an ever-



darkening vision; a Sadeian consciousness normally relegated to the backrooms and only spoken in hushed tones gains energy. Eventually, in Chapter 52, the Underwoods bring their dark vision into our view:

Claire Underwood: We can't fight everything off one by one, Francis. But if we make this—we make it work for us.

Frank Underwood: Create chaos.

Claire Underwood: More than chaos.

Frank Underwood: War.

Claire Underwood: Fear.

Frank Underwood: Fear. Brutal. Total.

Claire Underwood: I'm done trying to win over people's hearts.

Frank Underwood: Let's attack their hearts.

Claire Underwood: We can *work* with fear.

Frank Underwood: Yes, we can.

*Shudder.* Backed into the possibility of losing what power they have collected, they are willing to press fear into the hearts of their own nation in order to continue their eternal striving.

In *Dark Eros*, Moore (1990) comments, “if nature puts ‘sick’ fantasies in our imaginations, then perhaps nature is expressing an unfathomable and revolting truth” (p. 6). Perhaps *House of Cards* has enjoyed immense popularity, despite using disturbing imagery of murder and torture and having central characters that act in anti-social ways for exactly this reason. Here is a truth imagined in a form that commands our attention and gives an outlet to the unspeakable aspects of human nature.

Frank shares with us early on that he understands his role as a libertine: one who believes that the rules are made to be broken and that the rules create the opportunity to exert control. Most rule-makers would not so boldly admit to leveraging their knowledge of the rules into power. Early in the series Frank speaks directly to us, the audience: “What a martyr craves more than anything is a sword to fall on, so you sharpen the blade, hold it at just the right angle, and then 3, 2, 1,” and Donald Blythe, an image of innocence in this scene, falls on the sword just as Frank predicted: “It should be me. It was my bill.” If we hold to the necessity of sadism, what we have just witnessed is the innocent being given the chance to fulfill his role, just as the libertine does his. Frank's manipulation of Donald's dedication to education is ugliness, but this ugliness does not disappear when we ignore it. Beyond questions of right and wrong, it simply is. Turning a deaf ear to such an exchange only finds us once again identifying with the innocent out of default, as Sade and Moore have warned against. If we instead take the disturbing image as a metaphor we might instead find the necessity of darkness. Dark images might be understood as instructive, just as necessary and obvious as the opposing sides of a coin. To deny the dark image its place in psyche is to deny death, decay, and entropy. Hades himself would be barred from the psyche unwilling to entertain this aspect of consciousness. The mythopoetic psyche does not stick to an image of light. By playing with images in *House of Cards* or other grotesque dramas perhaps the innate darkness of being might be entertained in our consciousness with slightly less rigid terror.

### Innocence Splayed for Inspection

The world rarely presents us with black-and-white simplicity, it is in the grey areas, we say, that life is lived. Fiction, however, can illustrate a world that does swing boldly from evil to good, vivifying both innocence and sadism, allowing us to dance with the devil psychologically without corrupting or destroying our literal lives. *House of Cards* is a fictional setting where light and dark are conspicuously on display, at least to the viewer. The Underwoods clearly embody what Jung (1959/1990) would call shadow, yet they also, particularly in the first two years of storyline seem driven towards what might be called *good works*: the clean water initiative and public education funding, for example. The Underwoods do not shy away from any means to achieve their more virtuous goals. In Sade's work, the libertines take advantage of the virtuous because in being true to their own dark eros they *are* in the right. This confounds our standard morality, to say that evil has its place in the natural order. But psychologically, Jung (1959/1990) says we must meet the shadow—the repressed parts of ourselves, including morbid darkness—in order to take even the first steps toward wholeness. Moore (1990) extended this idea: “innocence is held by inertia that can be stupid and blind. It does not want to be corrupted, and it will insist for as long as possible that evil is not real” (p. 45). Here we have a critical aspect of Claire Underwood—she admits the presence of evil, even as she struggles with her personal moral compass. Unlike Frank, she displays infrequent but seemingly genuine capacity for self-reflection. She appears to empathize, and yet this does not diminish her ability to capitalize on any situation. In fact, her empathy and emotional awareness may be the most finely honed weapons in her political arsenal. She finds a way to work with the most unlikely creatures of politics, manipulate them to create what she deems needed in the world, whether that is funding global non-profit water initiatives or subverting the electoral system.

Displaying her libertine nature, Claire rejects moralism, sexual and otherwise, and in doing so, she throws off societal conventions and lives in accord with her personal convictions, dark and twisted as they may be. Rejecting identification with the persona required of her by the public, Claire brings consciousness to the choice between innocence and knowing. She takes lovers who serve her purposes and uses sexual encounters—even with her husband—as strategy. Claire moves through the world, dark to light and back, without shying away from the opportunities offered by sexual acts, both physical and psychological. Utilizing the power she knows she has, Claire engages in sex as suits her at the moment, not as might suit the cultural narrative of morality. She takes her pleasure and her fertility into her own hands. Yet Claire remains unconscious of her wholeness. She stymies her own individuation process in turning a blind eye to Francis's most depraved acts. From the Lacanian perspective as well, bucking moral constraint in favor of sexual desire makes discernible the presence of the unconscious, whose will, according to Lacan, is always sexual at the root. Claire becomes stuck when she identifies too closely with her husband, thus she slips into the roles of have and have-not in the mud-wrestle for Lacan's Imaginary Phallus.

The use of innocence and darkness is a strengthening paradox in the American political game (Schenk, 2012, p. 31). Claire is required to present a persona of the diminutive feminine while also holding her ground in the face of any darkness, be it the Russian president or impending war. Moore (1990) asked us to look at what the libertine

consciousness does to innocence: “the libertine brings it down . . . stretched carefully for inspection” (p. 41). Do not look away from the slicing exposure life has brought. This messy inspection is what brings about the movement in therapy as well, though this requires courage. While the butterfly it remains inside its cocoon little can be learned of its beauty, but once stretched out, intricate, individual details are available, allowing an understanding the butterfly’s complex workings. In other words, it is necessary to *look* directly into one’s most shame-laden, dark corners in order to see where *innocence can be met with enough cruelty to submit to knowing*. Claire is playing both the innocent and the libertine, but she is missing the psychological ability to bring the two into relation. Another character has appeared and will perhaps do just that, in the lover Claire has most recently taken, Tom Yates.

Tom has a flexible relationship to imposed morality. Having lived at the edges of society as a junky and a prostitute, he looks deeply into the people around him, with no apparent judgment or investment in social norms. He seeks the story rather than the good. In other words, he is in quest of complexity. He does not turn away from the evil he sees, just looks behind it. His steadfast insight is an example, I believe, of the consciousness Moore called Sadeian. To integrate the Sadeian consciousness is to get comfortable with paradox and to hold personal convictions while maintaining space for the multiple truths that make up any relationship. From Chapter 39:

Claire Underwood: There’s a lot more to Francis and me than what you wrote.

Tom Yates: Maybe so, but I never got a chance to ask.

Claire Underwood: Then ask. Whatever you want.

Tom Yates: Why aren’t you with him in Iowa?

Claire Underwood: *[pause]* I’m headed there tomorrow.

Tom Yates: You see? I ask a question, and neither of you answer. It’s tiresome constantly swinging a sledgehammer at the facade, just to get a glimpse beneath the cracks.

Claire Underwood: Tell me what you see.

Tom Yates: Somebody who’s lost. But I don’t know, maybe it’s all for the best. I’d rather imagine who you might be than who you actually are.

Good luck, Claire.

Tom has immense patience for the unfolding of innocence and evil, but little for the evasion of personal reflection. One could hope that his involvement in the Underwood family (in the fourth season he is openly in a triadic sexual—almost familial—situation with them) will shift the dynamic of unconscious drives. Frank may be subsumed in his identification with the shadow, but at least until the final chapters of Season 4, the possibility of some degree of shadow integration remains in Claire.

## The Line

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of Frank as fictional president is that we must live with the full knowledge that he is a murderer, not in some removed sense as commander in chief, but in a personal, bloody-handed way. Surely this is the moral line that should not be crossed? Here we must stretch towards the metaphorical, allow the

fiction to paint a harsh image for our close examination, for death leaves none of us untouched, and murder is quite real indeed. As viewers, we have proof that Frank is guilty of at least two murders with his own hands. Witness the calculation of Peter's death and the cold harshness of Zoe's:

Chapter 11: With Claire gone to seek respite in the arms of a lover, Frank is awash in the mess he created with Peter Russo's life. From the moralistic perspective, this is when Frank crosses the line from politically heartless to unredeemable. He has led Russo deeply into the labyrinth of the congressman's own personal demons. As the darkness closes in, Frank comes to realize that he has one way out of the mess, and he moves to eliminate his problem. Frank drives a drunk Russo home, parks in a tiny garage and leads him into a drunken stupor-sleep, finishing off the job by lulling Russo down with a bedtime confession of his own. As Peter drifts off, Frank hastily wipes off the car, uses Peter's finger to press the ignition button, and quietly exits, closing the door and killing Peter in a cloud of carbon monoxide by morning.

Chapter 14: Descending the escalator into the D.C. metro tunnels, Zoe can hear makeshift drums beat out an intense rhythm. An overconfident Zoe finds Frank lurking in the shadows of a temporary fence structure between the train tracks. They are supposedly cleaning the slate to begin working together again, he tells her to clear her phone of contact information and she complies. He asks if, "we can trust one another, help one another again." She agrees but with one further question: "Russo, the passenger seat—I need to know if I was a part of someone's murder." She scrambles for words, almost begging him to clear her conscience. He mutters, "Jesus," as he turns and heads away, she follows and in a split second, he lunges and from an invisible position, shoves her in front of the moving train. We see and hear her body splatter across the hulking metal train. The scene changes quickly, and Francis is met by Claire with a small cake bearing one lit candle. It is his birthday. He extinguishes the candle with two fingers.

Even if we had not witnessed Peter Russo and Zoe Barnes dying, we would likely know for certain that Frank caused their demise. He sees himself as little more than a particular force causing two deaths. "Time would have killed Peter, I simply moved the timeline," he says to us, reminding us that his libertine nature and Phallus seeking rule all actions. Is this not what we call evil? I think that it is. But the fictive image is nonetheless instructional as to the harsh reality of animal life and the myriad paths a soul can take in its time on earth. "To live this life with full participation in nature is to adopt its cruelty and vulnerability," wrote Moore (1990, p. 165). We cannot escape cruelty through ignorance. Perhaps a better question than the definition of evil is what we might gain by looking at evil through the screen or on the page. Again, it is important to draw the distinction between looking at evil, admitting it as the polarity of innocence, and actually engaging in terrible actions. To embrace Sadeian consciousness is not the same as committing violent or evil acts.

### Conclusion: The Uses of the Evil Image

Throughout the seasons, a small number of people have been privy to some of Frank's unlawful acts. Some have died, some have been silenced through intimidation, and some have pushed the truth from their own minds. Lucas Goodwin, a journalist who knew Frank's darkest crime, was silenced through intimidation, incarceration, and humiliation, but he never defected from his virtuous stance.

Chapter 42: Lucas has grown increasingly obsessed over the past two years in prison for the Underwood set-up sting charge of cyber-terrorism. Lucas is willing to submit even to trading his body, his sexual favors in order to get the truth about Frank Underwood into the hands of someone who can change the future. He leaves the relative safety of his identity protection house and in desperation finds a way into contact with Frank's major opponent and the former solicitor general, Heather Dunbar. This is a fool's errand, however, and as she backs away from his insane-sounding conspiracy theory/truth, he breaks apart, weeping in a stairwell. There is nothing left for Lucas, but still, it is hard to imagine what is about to come.

Lucas will go on to choose a suicide mission in order to end what he perceives as Frank Underwood's wrongful life. Moore (1990) explains how we might navigate the dark eros, with a more hopeful outcome than Lucas':

Our task is not to rationalize this evil with the whitening language of psychology, or to integrate it with our personalities so that its black becomes gold, but rather eternally to find ways to allow evil to coexist with our preference for good, darkly infect everything we do and think, and especially reveal its own poetic reading of our lives and its own meaningfulness. (p. 185)

In depth psychology, there is the temptation to use metaphor in order to focus on the light and growth aspects of life—in other words, to turn away from the dark through the fantasy of transformation. In Lacan's Phallus, we can choose to recognize a complex that can be surmounted with intense psychoanalysis and cautious recognition of the unconscious. In classical Jungian psychology we can, as Moore (1990) said, always be attempting to exchange black for gold, to individuate, to move toward wholeness. Either way, we risk missing a valid, if strange, perspective of our inner world by diverting all attention to the light and away from the dark. Feeling compelled to convert the dark into light demonstrates a limitation that might be overcome if one opens to the perverted image. I contend that it may even be an act of self-care to embrace the dark images of *House of Cards* and other sadistic art, suggesting to oneself that the shadow is welcome and that unconscious desires can be given imagistic representation. Creating space for what has been as yet unwelcome can be seen as a nurturing attentiveness to soul—all aspects of soul.

Moore (1990) suggests that the best way to react to evil in artistic work is with more art (p. 193). *House of Cards*, I would argue, does just that. The artistic eye and ear have been tuned more finely to the presence of darkness first during the creation of *House of Cards* and again through our digestion of this art. As Moore (1990) said of Sade's work: "Here, the sexual imagination symbolically represents the necessary

ravishing of the innocent, pure part of our soul” (p. ix). Willimon does likewise; in *House of Cards*, we witness the ravishing of our political ideal in the hands of politicians. Taking in the warped depravity of the Underwoods our imaginations are stretched to include a multitude of perversions possible in the bureaucratic shadows. In 2016, the United States presidential election results shocked many around the world. Despite open hostility towards minority groups, violent language, and anti-intellectual attitudes, Donald Trump ascended to the presidency. The pretension of perfection or light that previously attached itself to presidential politics appears to have dissolved. It remains to be seen what level of darkness becomes visible during the totality of this presidential term. To protect ourselves against the blindness brought on by staring at the light I suggest we follow Moore’s thinking—our society is in need of more art of a dark nature, not less. The psychological, intentional digestion of such works is a necessary aspect of our contemporary age, just as it was in Sade’s so long ago.

### Contributor

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The text is cited by chapter numbers, which run sequentially through five seasons.

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## **Walled Woman (series)**

### **Come Find Me**



### **Hearth Goddess**





### **Joining Light and Dark**



### **Wise Repose**



**In Service to the Eye**



Tracy Ferron

Photos: Lori A. Cheung 2017

## Depth Psychology in Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

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**Abstract:** The essay first shows that Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* aligns with many Jungian psychological concepts, including the shadow, the collective unconscious, the *unus mundus*, and active imagination. It then reads the text through the lens provided by James Hillman's *Re-Visioning Psychology*, a book she considers "instrumental." His personifying, pathologizing, psychologizing, and soul-making or dehumanizing—a reworking of the Jungian individuation process—provide relevant analogies for Anzaldúan thought, particularly her *conocimiento* process. Using Hillman as a lens helps to schematize her broad array of subjects. Despite depth psychology's relevance to *Borderlands*, however, the essay argues that Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* re-visions *Re-Visioning Psychology* by emphasizing expanded states of awareness, body wisdom, and the spirit world in order to provide a more inclusive vision of the psyche than Hillman puts forth. Thus, the essay demonstrates that Jung—as well as Jung-via-Hillman—contributes more to the hybridity of Anzaldúa's work than has been previously recognized.

**Keywords:** Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, Jung, depth psychology

### Introduction

In an endnote in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (B), Gloria Anzaldúa writes: "According to Jung and James Hillman, 'archetypes' are the presences of gods and goddesses in the psyche. Hillman's book, *Re-Visioning Psychology* . . . has been instrumental in the development of my thought" (118, n. 6). In fact, Anzaldúa was familiar with passages from C. G. Jung's *Collected Works* and with at least three of Hillman's books: *Re-Visioning Psychology*, *Healing Fiction*, and *Dream and the Underworld*. There has been previous mention of depth psychology in Anzaldúa studies, but there is a greater role for Jung and especially for Hillman in a reading of *Borderlands* than has been previously recognized.<sup>1</sup> How do depth-psychological concepts inform *Borderlands*, and in what ways and to what extent can *Re-Visioning Psychology* aid interpretation? Multiple hints in *Borderlands* suggest the impact of Jung on her thinking, and Hillman's book provides a schematic way to understand Anzaldúa's text. Of course, the purpose here is not to deny her breadth of reading but rather, by focusing on Jung and Hillman, to demonstrate her familiarity with Jungian concepts and her text's resonance with Hillman's framework of personifying, pathologizing, psychologizing, and soul-making or dehumanizing. Demonstrating the role of Jung and Hillman in Anzaldúan hybridity does not require charting other areas' more obvious contributions, and major attempts to do so would be beyond the scope of the present essay. In addition, although many examples of Jungian imbrication can be charted, not all of them can be fully

illustrated in this limited space. The aim, however, is to make a suitable beginning by showing both her use of Jungian terminology and concepts as well as her extensive parallels to Hillman, including even a bit of plagiaristic duplication. Ultimately, the essay attempts to show not only Anzaldúa's debt to depth psychology but also her transcendence of its development in Hillman, for ultimately she provides a more inclusive version of the psyche by re-visioning *Re-Visioning Psychology* through greater attention to expanded states of awareness, body wisdom, and the spirit world.

### **Anzaldúa and Jungian Psychology**

Anzaldúa's extensive incorporation of depth psychology, especially through her use of Jungian terminology and concepts, is an appropriate starting point. To begin with, she pushes off from the mainstream in stating that she "know[s] things older than Freud, older than gender," which refers in context to "the animal body, the animal soul" (B 48). Erika Aigner-Varoz considers "older than Freud" to refer to Coatli, an ancient serpent that signifies, for example, a sacred feminine refuge, "human and beast," and the sexual drive, among other things (51, 55–56). But the phrase "older than Freud" may also imply instinct, the archetypes, and the collective unconscious. In *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality* (L) Anzaldúa's term for the personal and collective unconscious is "el cenote . . . a subterranean reservoir of personal and collective knowledge" (66; cf. 98). In addition, she is aware of what Jung calls the *unus mundus* (the one world or unitary world), a field of energy (one that is even larger than the collective unconscious) in which matter, psyche, and spirit all participate. Although the term *unus mundus* does not appear in *Borderlands*, Anzaldúa affirms the matter-psyche-spirit nexus when she observes, "'One of the things that doesn't get talked about is the connection between body, mind, and spirit—anything that has to do with the sacred, anything that has to do with the spirit'" (qtd. in Keating, "Introduction: Reading" 51, n. 16). Of the similar unity of body, mind, and soul, she states: "They're all one. Since Descartes we've split them and view them as separate compartments, but they're interwoven" (51). *Light in the Dark* provides a more specific vocabulary for the imbrication: "invisible fibers," "source reality," "energy web," spirit that "infuses all that exists," and "the ultimate unity and interdependence of all beings" (15, 38, 83 137, 138). According to AnaLouise Keating, Anzaldúa is describing "a type of fluid cosmic spirit/energy/force that embodies itself throughout—and as—all existence" ("Inner Struggles" 247; emphasis in the original).<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Anzaldúa's mention of Rupert Sheldrake's morphogenic fields (L 155) implies that what connects and imbues everything is nonlocal consciousness. She evidently shares Jung's awareness of what is today called quantum entanglement.

What is the significance of the Sheldrake reference for our understanding of Anzaldúa's work? Field theory proposes that separation in its various forms, including, one may suppose, the type that leads to racial/national division, is an illusion and that human beings are all connected at the level of the collective unconscious or some other invisible field. Jung understands that the basis for this connectedness is that matter and psyche overlap (the psychoid factor). Matter has a psychological aspect, psyche a physical aspect, and the archetypes, the things "older than Freud," are where psyche and matter meet. As I suggest elsewhere, "Freud is to classical physics, causality, the personal unconscious, and the physical world as Jung is to quantum physics, acausality, the

collective unconscious, and the *unus mundus*” (111). This unitary world is characterized by what Michael Conforti, writing in *Field, Form, and Fate*, calls “the indivisibility of psyche and matter” (51), and Anzaldúa would agree, as various statements suggest. For example, “We’re supposed to forget that every cell in our bodies, every bone and bird and worm has spirit in it,” and “the body is smart” (B 58, 59–60). The reference to Sheldrake, then, points to her awareness that the psychic functioning that she calls *la facultad* has as its basis what physicist Dean Radin, in his study of psi, calls “field consciousness” or “a continuum of nonlocal intelligence, permeating space and time” (159, 157). Paradoxically, *Borderlands*, though it looks backward to history and myth, also sets an anchor in the new science. When she speaks of “a deeper sensing,” the opening of the depths, a shift in perception, darkness, the underworld, and a vertical plunge to a transrational realm of connections among body, mind, and spirit (B 61), she aligns with the thinking of Sheldrake and affirms the connectedness among the parts of the *unus mundus*.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the Sheldrake reference serves as a powerful reminder that Anzaldúa’s comments about psi are not the empty platitudes of an unstable New Age experimenter but instead have legitimate scientific underpinnings.

Let us return now to Jungian psychology and sketch the breadth of its incorporation in Anzaldúa’s work. Her treatment of the shadow archetype bears out her belief that the unconscious is both personal and collective. She references “what Jung calls the Shadow, the unsavory aspects of ourselves” (B 59), and imagines a “Shadow-Beast” with “lidless serpent eyes” (B 42) that signals the shadow’s role in moving us toward wisdom and individuation. Along with shadow and Shadow-Beast, Anzaldúa incorporates the concept of “the positive shadow: hidden aspects of myself and the world” (L 2) to signal that the shadow includes the repressed and the unknown and that this material may be positive or negative as well as personal or collective. As Daryl Sharp confirms, the shadow consists of those “[h]idden or unconscious aspects of oneself, *both good and bad*, which the ego has either repressed or never recognized” (123; emphasis added). For example, as Aigner-Varoz points out, the Shadow-Beast may represent “forbidden inner knowledge recognized by the ‘supra-human,’ god-like parts of ourselves” (52). As this range of interpretations suggests, not only does the Shadow-Beast represent “multifaceted internalized oppression” (Yarbro-Bejarano 20); in *Light in the Dark* “shadow beasts” and “collective shadow beasts” are also unacceptable personal and societal tendencies (10, 16). On the one hand, the repressed components of Anzaldúa’s personal shadow include rebellious feminism, sexuality (menstrual blood is “the mark of the Beast” [B 64]), class consciousness, at times even her native language and psychic ability, as well as her “numbness, anger, and disillusionment” (L 10). On the other, the collective or national shadow consists of racism, violence, consumerism, injustice, environmental destruction, and action without “compassion or intelligence” (L 2, 10, 16). Given “things older than Freud” and the correspondence between the personal and the collective, it must be that lower-case shadow beasts (the parts: aspects, tendencies, characteristics) participate in the upper-case Shadow-Beast or shadow archetype. It is the shadow archetype, in Jung the *potential* for representation, that makes shadow characteristics (images, manifestations, metaphors) possible.

The relationship between the *unus mundus* and the shadow is María DeGuzmán’s subject in her work on Anzaldúa’s aesthetics. DeGuzmán notes Anzaldúa’s association of

*la facultad* with a strand of references to “night, shadows, and various kinds of darkness” (212). The critic then considers “nepantilism [the in-between state experienced by subalterns] in terms of the Shadow and darkness,” emphasizing not only the shadow’s links to “unrepressed drives and instincts,” the physical body, and the intellect (213) but also, more broadly, “The Dark Night of the Body-Mind-Spirit” (216). Although the full Jungian terminology is not present, DeGuzmán is proposing that *nigredo*—“the mental disorientation that typically arises in the process of assimilating unconscious contents, particular aspects of the shadow” (Sharp 91)—participates in all parts of the *unus mundus* (the physical world, psyche, and spirit). If nepantilism, *la facultad*, and the shadow are of individuation all compact, then the “pain, shame, anguish, and sorrow” of *nigredo* can lead to “strength, energy, and creativity” (DeGuzmán 217). Anzaldúa’s point is that the shadow characteristics that we seek to hide from the public become a source of strength once they are acknowledged.

Along with much of Jung’s theory of the shadow, Anzaldúa shares his divisions within the psyche and the role of individuation in bringing those parts into the Self. Ego is “the conscious I,” which presumably includes “will”/volition (B 72, 88). Persona is “the personality that had been imposed on me” or simply the “mask” (B 38, 96). The phrase “soul (Self)” signals that the Self is her “inner self, the entity that is the sum total of all [her] reincarnations,” along with the “interiority of both the human personality and the external world, the anima mundi [sic]” (B 61, 72; L 29). Individuation, or developing “a more whole perspective” by bringing the parts into the Self, begins when “[w]e try to make ourselves conscious of the Shadow-Beast” (B 101, 42). In fact, waking up the Shadow-Beast is the key metaphor for the start of the individuation process because Anzaldúa, like Jung, believes that work with the shadow is individuation’s first step. She writes, “When we own our shadow [rather than repressing, projecting, or being unaware of it], we allow the breath of healing to enter our lives” (L 22). She also shares Jung’s sense that such personal change may potentially beget societal change (B 109, L 92). Here is the desired end of the individuation process on the personal scale: “All the lost pieces of myself come flying from the deserts and the mountains and the valleys, magnetized toward that center. *Completa*” (B 73). On the personal level, her lesbian psyche—her being “two in one body, both male and female”—makes her (in another Jungian formulation) the sacred marriage, the “*hieros gamos*: the coming together of opposite qualities within” (B 41). Similarly, on the cultural level, she “gather[s] the splintered and disowned parts of *la gente mexicana* [the Mexican people] and hold[s] them in [her] arms” (B 110).

More than Jung, however, Anzaldúa has confidence in the reality of El Mundo Zurdo, the Other World (literally the left-handed world), which includes the personal unconscious, the collective unconscious, the dream world, and “the mundis imaginalis” (the imaginal world, which “resides in el cenote”) (L 55–56). Accordingly, she challenges the anthropological understanding of *participation mystique* as merely primitive and suggests that “the world of the imagination—the world of the soul—and of the spirit is just as real as physical reality” (B 59). Access to this Other World is possible via various means, including the writing process, and in her creative work she puts various Jungian tools to productive purpose. As an author, she operates in Jung’s visionary mode of composition, meaning that her imagination is a conduit for imagery



from the collective unconscious. If imagination is “[t]he ability to spontaneously generate images in the mind,” then Jungian active imagination means “allow[ing] the images to speak to you” in a dialogue (L 36, 35). For Anzaldúa, the latter is done via what David Carrasco and Roberto Lint Sagerena call “a shamanic imagination,” that is, one that incorporates trance, spiritual journeys, and contact with ancestral spirits (224). She writes, “When I create stories in my head, that is, allow the voices and scenes to be projected in the inner screen of my mind, I ‘trance’” (B 91). In such a state, she *becomes* the “dialogue between [her] Self and *el espíritu del mundo* [the spirit of the world]” (B 91–92). In this way, her writing, fueled by active imagination, is one of her ways of connecting with El Mundo Zurdo.

The metaphor associated with active imagination is descent or what Jung calls *nekyia*. According to *Light in the Dark*, this “lower-world journey” touches the personal or collective unconscious or “a parallel universe” (28). In *Borderlands*, she states that “we plunge vertically” into the unconscious toward the soul; when Coatlicue first visited, Anzaldúa “‘fell’ into the underworld”; and she also says that she “descended into *mictlán*, the underworld” (B 61, 64, 70). These details suggest that she and Jung share a shaman-like exploration of the inner world. Jung even uses a similar directional metaphor to describe his own *nekyia*: “In order to grasp the fantasies which were stirring in me ‘underground,’ I knew that I had to let myself *plummet down* into them, as it were. . . . Then *I let myself drop*. Suddenly it was as though the ground literally gave way beneath my feet, and *I plunged down* into dark depths” (MDR 178–79; emphases added). *Light in the Dark* sums up both her own experience and Jung’s: “A lower-world journey may be viewed as contacting the personal or collective unconscious or as an excursion into a parallel universe” (28). The statement affirms both the underworld within and the Other World without, which are accessed through vision and near-death experience, respectively. Examples of both appear in Jung’s autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Anzaldúa’s poem, which begins “Dead, / the doctor by the operating table said,” is a fine rendering of one of her own NDEs (B 56–57).

In *MDR*, Jung also discusses the distinction between his No. 1 and No. 2 personalities: his conscious, rational, persona-driven, time-bound personality versus a more ancient strand that is in touch with the collective unconscious. This distinction parallels Anzaldúa’s distinction between the masculine eagle and the feminine snake: “The eagle symbolizes the spirit (as the sun, the father); the serpent symbolizes the soul (as the earth, the mother)” (B 27).<sup>4</sup> In a more sweeping statement that affirms El Mundo Zurdo, she notes, “Not only was the brain split into two functions but so was reality” (B 59). Also, in a section on the divine principle within us, Anzaldúa implies her dedication to the “other mode” of consciousness, the serpent side, Jung’s No. 2 personality, by writing, “I’ve always been aware that there is a greater power than the conscious I” (B 72). The section where she says this is entitled “That Which Abides,” but she also means “That *Witch* Abides”: namely, the No. 2 personality that she cannot be talked out of by the rational white male superego-driven religious/scientific establishment because, among other reasons, it is important to humanity’s long-term survival. Although she notes at one point an unbridgeable gap between “the loquacious rational eye” and “the tongueless magical eye” (tongueless because it speaks in images) (B 67), the two must be in relationship so that the deeper psyche tempers the conscious tendency toward

environmental degradation and other ills. If “the left hand, that of darkness, of femaleness, of ‘primitiveness,’ can divert the indifferent, right-handed, ‘rational’ suicidal drive” (B 91), then *mestiza* consciousness, “a holistic, both/and way of thinking and acting,” arises (Keating and Gonzáles-Lopez, “Glossary” 243). The point is in sync with the holism of Jung’s own environmental vision. “What is needed,” he states, “is to call a halt to the fatal dissociation that exists between man’s higher and lower being; instead, we must unite conscious man and primitive man” (*Jung Speaking* 397; qtd. in Sabini 146).

In summary, Anzaldúa adopts and sometimes adapts the following Jungian theories: the archetypes, the collective unconscious, the shadow, the idea that shadow work is the first stage in the individuation process, ego and persona, the notion of the Self as wholeness, the *hieros gamos*, *participation mystique*, the *unus mundus*, the visionary mode of literary composition, active imagination, *nekyia*, and Jung’s No. 1 and No. 2 personalities. Pinning down what was actual influence and what was common ground arrived at independently is beyond the scope of this study, but it should be clear by now that a demonstration of the role of Jungian terminology and concepts enhances our understanding depth psychology’s role in the hybridity of *Borderlands*.

### **Anzaldúa and Hillman’s *Re-Visioning Psychology***

Clearly there is much in common between Anzaldúan thought and Jungian psychology—some of it no doubt directly borrowed, some probably arrived at independently. But how are we to understand her own statement that Hillman’s *Re-Visioning Psychology* was a great influence on her thinking in *Borderlands*? How, in particular, do his four imperatives inform a reading of *Borderlands*? To begin with, *Re-Visioning Psychology* attempts to correct what Hillman considers impediments to depth psychology, many of which Anzaldúa would also oppose. These include anthropocentrism, dualism, egocentrism, literalism, oversimplification, positivism, reason’s domination of emotion, scientific materialism, and especially the assumption that the imaginal realm is unreal. Hillman’s response to these intellectual errors is to encourage us to examine the archetypes from multiple points of view. “Ultimately,” he writes, “we shall admit that archetypal psychology is theophanic: personifying, pathologizing, psychologizing, and soul-making or dehumanizing are the modes of polytheizing, the means of revealing Gods [sic] in a pluralistic universe” (228). Personifying generates images to represent archetypes, pathologizing recognizes the images’ negative content, psychologizing unpacks the ideas imbedded in the images, and dehumanizing or soul-making relates the images to mythical patterns. In simpler terms, images from the unconscious support individuation when they are subject to the agency of emotion, intellect, and myth.

*Personifying.* Hillman defines personifying as “the basic psychological activity—the spontaneous experiencing, envisioning and speaking of the configurations of existence as psychic presences” (12; emphasis in the original). More simply, personifying is the generation of images to represent archetypes, and for Anzaldúa these images are native rather than European. She writes, “Let’s stop importing Greek myths and the Western Cartesian split point of view and root ourselves in the mythological soil and soul of this continent” (B 90). Of course, Hillman does not favor binary oppositions or



unbalanced dualities; the key point is rather that Anzaldúa hybridizes Hillman's system and her own native tradition. Instead of embracing the colonizing impulse to employ Western tradition, she uses native mythical female figures to personify archetypal forces that come together in the individuation process. Her legendary females share the archetypal/mythical resonance of the Greek gods in Hillman's chapter 4 on dehumanizing/soul-making. Yet these new-world figures are part of the personifying process because of a related image, the serpent, which represents the repressed left-handed forces that have languished under Western rationality and Cartesian dualism.

Anzaldúa's main mythological personifications are as follows (B 49–50). Coatlicue, the serpent goddess or "Serpent Skirt," is the "creator goddess" and the mother of various children, including a daughter, Coyolxauhqui, and a son, Huitzilopochtli, who decapitates his sister. Also descended from Coatlicue is Coatlalopeuh, which is the Indian name for Guadalupe (the Virgin Mary). Mary is Guadalupe, and Guadalupe is Coatlalopeuh. Like her mother, Coatlalopeuh ("she who crushed the serpent" [B 51]) links etymologically to the key image. Under "male-dominated Azteca-Mexica culture" (B 49) female deities were split into a virgin-whore binary. On the one hand, Guadalupe is associated with the Aztec goddess Tonantsi (the good mother), and la Llorona (mourner of her lost children). On the other, the darker feminine aspects are personified by Coatlicue; two Aztec fertility goddesses, Tlazolteotl and Cihuacoatl; and la Chingada, the fucked one. To counter this dichotomy, Anzaldúa emphasizes that "*Coatlicue-Cihuacoatl-Tlazolteotl-Tonantzin-Coatlalopeuh-Guadalupe . . . are one*" (B 72; emphases in the original). She specifically identifies Coatlicue as an image or archetype (B 68), but all of these female figures are archetypal in nature. They are "sub-personalities" or "imaginal figures (archetypes) of the inner world" (L 3, 7), which appear to be separate in the physical world but participate in wholeness at a deeper level. Anzaldúa attempts to bring that unity into manifestation by healing the false dichotomy. It is true, as Norma Alarcón states, that these "polyvalent name insertions in *Borderlands* are a rewriting of the feminine, a reinscription of genetics" (48). But more specifically, Anzaldúa is dividing the female archetype as Jung divides the anima in identifying the Kore (maiden, matron, and crone) and the stages of eroticism (Mary, Helen, Eve, Sophia). For Jung, each personification signifies a different aspect of men's experience of their inner feminine and provides an imaginal link to the depths where distinctions disappear. It is the corresponding fragmentary components of women's experience that Anzaldúa attempts to unify and heal within her own psyche and within her readers' psyches.

*Pathologizing.* Much as Hillman suggests that fictions inhabit the realm of soul between nature (science, sense perception) and spirit (metaphysics, intellect) (152), Anzaldúa holds that images bridge "emotion and conscious knowledge" and are closer than words are to the unconscious (B 91). The content that those images embody and convey leads on to Hillman's pathologizing, "the psyche's autonomous ability to create illness, morbidity, disorder, abnormality, and suffering in any aspect of its behavior and to experience and imagine life through this deformed and afflicted perspective" (57). In short, pathologizing is shadow work—"learning through what is deviant, odd, off in oneself" (163). Anzaldúa's equivalent involves taking a stand against what W. E. B. Du Bois calls "double consciousness" or seeing oneself negatively through the eyes of the

dominant culture. Du Bois calls it a “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (11). Double consciousness involves internalizing the cultural shadow by accepting “[d]eviance [as] whatever is condemned by the community” (B 40). Hillman and Anzaldúa are alike in emphasizing the need to integrate the parts of the psyche that society condemns. Hillman suggests, for example, that pathologizing breaks one free from sole identification with the ego’s “external standards” and “upperworld” influences (89); and Anzaldúa insists that Chicanas must “no longer blame [the oppressors], nor disown the white parts, the male parts, the *pathological* parts, the queer parts, the vulnerable parts” (B 110; emphasis added). Thus, contrary to Theresa A. Martinez’s suggestion that Du Boisian double consciousness and Anzaldúan *mestiza* consciousness describe “interlocking systems of oppression” and share an oppositional nature (159, 162), *mestiza* consciousness emerges in the context of pathologizing as a proper medium for healing the negative emotional effects of double consciousness.

What is the nature of the pathologizing or shadow work that Anzaldúa advocates? Her reactionary intention is to engage with an ancient way of thinking that can help renew women in the present by rebalancing dualities. In *Borderlands* the serpent and the eagle are the images that represent the fundamental split within the human experience that needs to be healed: the division between our animal bodies and faculties that reflect the divine. About that division Anzaldúa states, “Humans fear the supernatural, both the undivine (the animal impulses such as sexuality, the unconscious, the unknown, the alien) and the divine (the superhuman, the god in us). Culture and religion seek to protect us from these two forces” (B 39). The statement reflects Chicanas’ repression both in body and in their more spiritual nature. Regarding “the undivine,” there is “*Cihuacoatl*, Serpent Woman, ancient Aztec goddess of the earth, of war and birth, patron of midwives, and antecedent of *la Llorona*” (B 57). She and other snake-women suggest that reconnecting with the animal body—versus the literal separation of mind and body in the decapitation of Coyolxauhqui—is fundamental to women’s individuation.

Society also wants us to think in binaries about “the divine” aspects of the human condition, or psychic functioning (*la facultad*), which is often mediated by the body (“the body is smart” [B 59–60]). Jungian analyst Jerome S. Bernstein notes in *Living in the Borderland: The Evolution of Consciousness and the Challenge of Healing Trauma* (a title that Anzaldúa may, in part, have inspired) that Western society pathologizes experiences of the transrational (xvi), but Anzaldúa specifically identifies the culprit that marginalizes “the supra-human, the god in ourselves”: “Institutionalized religion fears trafficking with the spirit world and stigmatizes it as witchcraft” (B 59). Since Catholicism and Protestantism have repressed both the body and the psychic experiences that filter through it, Anzaldúa attempts to counter their dualistic repression in herself, in Chicanas more generally, and even in the white oppressor by advocating “esta facultad [this faculty], a realm of consciousness reached only from an ‘attached’ mode (rather than a distant, separate unattached, mode), enabling us to weave a kinship entre todas las gentes y cosas [between all people and things]” (L 83). Anzaldúa’s emphasis on psychic experiences in the section on *la facultad* is a key element in her spiritual activism: sharing the reality of her psychic sensitivity through her work so that others may feel validated in their own abilities and in the value and unity of body, mind, and spirit. That

is Anzaldúa's purpose in describing her psychic experiences. As Irena Lara puts it in her study of the *bruja* (witch) in Chicano spirituality, "Striving to see from a holistic perspective and bridge the spiritual with the physical world, la Bruja models such holistic vision for us" ("Bruja Positionalities" 25). Certainly, as Carrasco and Sagarena assert, Anzaldúa's experiences are not reducible to *locura* (madness, pathology) (234).

Violence of various sorts is a further object of pathologizing in *Borderlands*. There is the figurative violence done by Anzaldúa's school teachers and professors against her racial/cultural identity, her native language, her Mexican accent, and her interest in Chicano literature. Accounts of reprimands and opposition by teachers at all educational levels are among the most heartfelt, particularly in chapter 5, "How to Tame a Wild Tongue." Others tried to force what was dear to her into the shadow, but these factors are brought to light in the text so that their energy contributes to her individuation instead of fueling her double consciousness. However, it is the literal violence that most engages the author in the image-making and pathologizing processes. Chicano women and men are subject to violence in the form of rape and lynching, respectively (B 25, 30). Similarly, Hillman writes, "Mythology, without its pathological side of animal monsters, *cruel slayings*, perverse arrangements, *wanton rapes*, ruinous penances, no longer touches the passions or speaks of and to the individual soul in its distress." Regarding Renaissance pathologizing, he also notes that "[s]tatistically favored themes in art were seduction, *rape*, and drunkenness" (8, 203; emphases added).

The images of rape and lynching come together in the second half of *Borderlands* in a poem called "We Call Them Greasers" (156–57), told from the point of view of a white rancher who, in a colonizing move, kicks Chicano squatters off his newly acquired land by threatening back taxes that they cannot afford to pay. Although most are properly deferential, the speaker disdains their lack of ambition, cowardice, inability to speak English, and Indian eyes. Most of the Chicanos depart without even an objection about their lost cattle, which the speaker's men have frightened off in the night, probably so that he can later add them to his own herd. A few troublemakers, however, try legal action and have to be burned out of their homes. He remembers one woman "in particular" whom he rapes ("She lay under me whimpering") and then murders ("I sat on her face until / her arms stopped flailing") while "her man" watches while tied to a nearby tree. The narrator concludes, "Lynch him, I told the boys."

"We Call Them Greasers" is in sync with a feminist anthropological approach because it dramatizes the way in which maintenance of binary oppositions like landowner/squatter and Caucasian/Chicana(o) violates human rights and deepens social injustice. The rape of the squatter woman is of grave concern, especially to a feminist like Anzaldúa who puts great emphasis on the body in the mind-body-spirit nexus and who would agree with Irene Lara and Elisa Facio that "to flesh the spirit and spirit the flesh *heals*" (11; emphasis added). Such violence against women and men as the poem dramatizes represents on a small scale the violence that characterized the takeover of formerly Mexican territories by the United States in the 19th century. The existence of poor, property-less workers illustrates one of the consequences of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), in which Mexico gave up parts of six American states, resulting in disadvantage for Mexicans who remained within the newly drawn American border. In other words, a small-scale event allegorizes a much greater injustice

perpetrated by the United States in an earlier era. Now the squatters, who are without rights on land that once belonged to their Mexican ancestors must move on to another marginalized situation that perpetuates unequal caste relations. Their culture and people endure within US borders along with their economic and political disadvantage. Yet there are glimmers of hope to be noted in the poem. Apparently, the workers are American citizens because the speaker states, "Some even had land grants / and appealed to the courts," which an undocumented person would be loath to do for fear of deportation. Their attempt at legal recourse, though futile and short lived because it lacks the political might of César Chávez's United Farm Workers of America, is emblematic of that greater, more organized movement, which did, over time and with great difficulty, achieve positive results.<sup>5</sup> Also, the act of resistance, of speaking out, that the poem registers is more fully realized by Anzaldúa in *Borderlands*, which reveals various injustices to a wide audience. The poem is particularly significant because it portrays situations that Anzaldúa must have seen as the daughter of share croppers. As Leni M. Silverstein and Ellen Lewin point out, feminist anthropology includes personal statements that break down the binaries of "'insider/outsider'" and "informant/anthropologist" (13).

The poem also dramatizes Hillman's definition of pathologizing. The Chicanos experience "morbidity, disorder, abnormality, and suffering," and Hillman's phrase "deformed and afflicted perspective" applies to both the Chicanos and the rancher (Hillman 57). There is pathologizing on both sides of the power binary. "Greasers" portrays double consciousness on the part of the subaltern Chicanos, especially those who are deferential and leave without incident; the postcolonial impulse of those who challenge the eviction; and the hegemonic voice of the narrator. Thus, the narrative provides a modern-day allegory of the colonization of the new world by Europeans and the suppression of native peoples, Anzaldúa's subject in chapter 1, where she discusses the US-Mexican War, lynchings, racism, economic disadvantage, and refugees, among other subjects. Including the poem is part of the pathologizing process of bringing to light and into wholeness such dire aspects of the prevailing Chicana(o) experience.

*Psychologizing or Seeing Through.* An archetype is "a set of ideas" (Hillman 130; emphasis in the original); therefore, archetypal images and associated lived experiences, although they may be negative and require pathologizing, also lead to "psychological ideas . . . those that engender the soul's reflection upon its nature, structure, and purpose" (117) and that enable us to *see through* the literal to the metaphorical. Hillman's process proceeds from images (personifying) through pathos (pathologizing) to *Logos* (psychologizing), which shares with *la facultad* "the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities" (B 60). This "psychologizing may take many paths," including several that Anzaldúa employs—"historical examination," "linguistic analysis," and art/poetry (Hillman 135–36). The key idea that emerges from her work is the *Borderlands* with its attendant *mestiza* consciousness. But in reflecting upon the psyche's "nature, structure, and purpose" she builds into *Borderlands* reflections of a system that corresponds in significant ways to some components of Jungian individuation and bears out Jung's idea that inner change sparks outer engagement (the essential components of Anzaldúan spiritual activism). That system enables one to understand *Borderlands* as a manifestation of the author's impulse toward individuation.

Anzaldúa's "overarching theory of consciousness" ("Quincentennial" 177) is called *conocimiento* (literally knowledge), and it is a "transformation process" (L17) with seven stages. As the serpent's sinuous coils suggest, these stages are nonlinear and recursive in actual lived practice, but they are described below in the order of their (numbered) appearance in chapter 6 of *Light in the Dark*.

- Stage one, *el arrebatado* (literally the outburst), involves fragmentation, rupture, disconnection, and *disconocimiento* (ignorance). The decapitated Coyolxauhqui is a relevant image, as are the virgin-whore split within the feminine and the use of multiple native figures to represent aspects of the Chicana experience. Double consciousness also illustrates this stage, with Anzaldúa's childhood experiences of discrimination as powerful illustrations.
- Stage two is the liminal state of *nepantla* where transformation begins via the experience of multiple perspectives and the collapsing or bridging of binaries, which is why it is "a syncretistic faculty" (L 114) that bears positive fruit. At this point, Anzaldúa states, "According to Jung, if you hold opposites long enough without taking sides, a new identity emerges" (L 127). As Jung points out in a similar statement, "We are crucified between the opposites and delivered up to the torture until the 'reconciling third' takes shape" (*Letters* 375). Liminal states—her near-death and psychic experiences, along with her use of active imagination—are examples of *nepantla*. Of course, *nepantla*'s in-between nature also characterizes various Borderland states—cultural, linguistic, physical, spiritual, and sexual.
- In stage three, the Coatlicue state (B, chapter 4), resistance to new knowledge and to other changes generates various emotions such as depression (Keating and Gonzáles-Lopez, "Glossary" 242). "In the Coatlicue state . . . you're caged in a private hell; you feel angry, fearful, hopeless, and depressed, blaming yourself as inadequate" (L 150). The Coatlicue state, like Jungian *nigredo*, is a dark night of the soul. There is also a close correspondence between the Coatlicue state and Hillman's pathologizing, especially with regard to the despair of illegal immigrants in chapter 1 and of the Chicanos in "Greasers."
- Stage four, *el compromiso* (literally the commitment), is a call to action. One leaves old ways behind, generates new knowledge, and begins the reconstruction process. Here one imagines a young Anzaldúa beginning to find her academic voice and to carve out her place in literary studies.
- Stage five is called putting Coyolxauhqui together because "[h]er round disk (circle)," as in Jung, "represents the self's striving for wholeness and cohesiveness" (L 89). This stone disk depicts her decapitation, but its roundness symbolizes wholeness and individuation, like the moon with which she is also associated. A person in stage five actively engages in positive transformation, recreation, and self-analysis. New personal and collective stories are created, and binaries are collapsed. Writing *Borderlands*, for example, is one way Anzaldúa puts Coyolxauhqui together, particularly given the author's attempt to collapse binaries such as Mexican and American in the Borderlands.

- Stage six is a clash of realities as one moves from interiority to social space by sharing new stories and adjusting them according to feedback. Whereas stage one is characterized by *desconocimientos* (unknowns), stage six involves *conocimiento* (knowledge), in particular a less dualistic and “more holistic perspective” (L 146). By this point, individuation has shifted from interiority to social engagement.
- The seventh and final stage is spiritual activism—helping others to achieve their own transformation and social emergence. As in depth psychology, inner change leads to change in society. Here one locates the mature Anzaldúa: author, speaker, spirit warrior.

So whereas Hillman’s psychologizing means examining archetypes-as-ideas, Anzaldúa’s *conocimiento*, an alternative (and more detailed) anatomy of the individuation process, includes brokenness, altered states, confrontation with the unconscious, and transformation in the individual and the community. Also, numerous segments of the *conocimiento* process are relatable to details in *Borderlands* and to the author’s own psychological journey.

*Dehumanizing or Soul-making.* The more holistic perspective that *conocimiento* urges is central to what Hillman means by dehumanizing or soul-making. The final section of *Re-Visioning Psychology* first addresses impediments, starting with “the singleness of vision of monotheistic consciousness” that makes the devil the carrier of our shadow, just as Hillman earlier objects to making the crucifixion of Jesus a container for pathologizing (225, 95). In addition, he specifically eschews “dualism” and sees dualities as different faces of a unity (170), much as Anzaldúa favors the restoration of “balanced dualities” (B 55) and understands the unity of all that is. For Hillman, the trouble is that “[r]eligion in our culture derives from spirit [eagle] rather than from soul [serpent], and so our culture does not have a religion that reflects psychology or is mainly concerned with soul-making” (168).<sup>6</sup> If the problem is that “institutionalized religion” promotes “singleness of meaning” (158) and if, as Anzaldúa asserts, it favors spirit over soul, “encourage[s] us to kill off parts of ourselves,” wants us to think “that the body is an ignorant animal,” and “impoverish[es] all life, beauty, pleasure” (B 59), then the solution is to invoke a tradition with a wider range of signification—the Greek gods for Hillman, native figures for Anzaldúa.

What, then, of the soul? For Hillman, “*soul is imagination*” (69; emphasis in the original); and “the place of soul [is] a world of imagination, passion, fantasy, reflection, [which] is neither physical and material on the one hand, nor spiritual and abstract on the other, yet bound to them both” (68)—a description that calls to mind the in-between state of *nepantla*. For Hillman, then, soul-making, another term for “the process of individuation” (188), means shifting focus (dehumanizing or de-egoizing) to recognize that images from the unconscious and personal experiences reflect mythic and archetypal patterns personified by the Greek gods (and corresponding native figures in Anzaldúa). Image-making and our symptoms are thus the “*via regia*” to soul-making (23, 75), a phrase that Anzaldúa upgrades by stating that “along with dreams your *body* is the royal road to *consciousness*” (L 138; emphases added). The echo’s implication is that *conocimiento* is a more embodied process than Hillman’s soul-making.

Hillman's chapter on soul-making/dehumanizing left such a deep impression on Anzaldúa that she mentioned it in her interview with Linda Smuckler:

About two or three years ago I was reading James Hillman, who's one of my favorites. . . . I was reading *Re-Visioning Psychology* and he was talking about how monotheism—the concept of the one god—is very elitist. He says that there's a plurality of things. He called it the "Gloria Duplex." But he got it from another source, from the Latin. It's the point of view of looking at things from different perspectives. (37)

What she remembered from *Re-Visioning Psychology* made its way into another comment: "The notion that the gods are forces and potencies within the human mind and that humans have, at the deepest levels of the mind, personifications of the great archetypal experiences is the current theory—more 'rational' than the belief that spirits are real" (L 37). While affirming Hillman's theory of dehumanizing, Anzaldúa pushes off from it by mentioning the spirit world, which does not figure prominently in his thought. Another reflection of Hillman's influence on Anzaldúa appears in *Borderlands*. He speaks of "[a] mythologizing that prefers many perspectives to operational definitions, a psychologizing that asks *Who?* and *What?* rather than *How?* and *Why?*—a personifying that subjectifies" (169; emphases in the original). Anzaldúa echoes him in stating: "Instead, the work has an identity; it is a 'who' or a 'what' and contains the presences of persons, that is, incarnations of gods or ancestors or natural and cosmic powers" (B 89). Her statement duplicates not only Hillman's ideas but also his language, but problematically there is no signal phrase or end note to indicate attribution. At the very least, Anzaldúa found in Hillman's *Re-Visioning Psychology* much that corresponded to her own ideas, but her own statement and various echoes indicate a shaping effect. Some aspects of his personifying, pathologizing, psychologizing, and dehumanizing or soul-making became internalized as her own.

Thus, re-visioning *Borderlands* through Hillman's fourfold lens not only provides waypoints to orient the reader but also underscores a sense of Anzaldúa's indebtedness to depth psychology. Despite this strong influence, however, it would be problematic to see Anzaldúan thought as Hillman's four imperatives reiterated in a Chicano context. They can help structure an analysis of the difficult and disparate material in *Borderlands*, but Anzaldúa did not consider *Re-Visioning Psychology* as a template for her own project. Indeed, she is generally praised for her originality. Keating states that three of Anzaldúa's concepts—*Borderlands*, the new *mestiza*, and *mestiza* consciousness—"broke new ground and merit the attention they've received" ("Introduction: shifting" 4). For Walter Mignolo, Anzaldúa's "great theoretical contribution is to create a space-in-between *from where* to think rather than a hybrid space *to talk about*" (qtd. in Carrasco and Sagarena 223; emphases in the original). As for *Borderlands* itself, Harold A. Torres considers it a "masterpiece" (124), and *Library Journal* acknowledged it as one of the best books of 1987 (Pinkvoss 16). But Anzaldúa's project also incorporates what has come before. As Julia Alvarez suggests, the "borderland state of mind" resembles John Keats's negative capability (234); and Jung's concept of *coniunctio*—a synthesis of opposites that begets new possibilities—also hovers in the background of Anzaldúa's key concepts, *Borderlands* and *mestiza* consciousness.

In light of Anzaldúa's interest in Hillman, *Borderlands* illustrates what Harold Bloom calls *tessera*, a term he borrows from Jacques Lacan, which represents "any later [writer's] attempt to persuade himself (and us) that the precursor's Word would be worn out if not redeemed as a newly fulfilled and enlarged Word of the ephebe [present author]" (67). Anzaldúa's native female figures, for example, replace Hillman's Greek gods. *Borderlands* consciousness and the hybridity that emerges from such a state—not a combination of binaries but a new third thing—are also not found in Hillman. She is more open than Hillman to the roles played by the body, psychic functioning, and the spirit world in individuation/*conocimiento*. Along those lines, the implication of the *unus mundus*, that "[n]othing is separate" (Anzaldúa, "Creativity" 106), is an aspect of *Borderlands* consciousness that has no clear parallel in *Re-Visioning Psychology*, which shies away from the spirit world. Not only is the *unus mundus* the assumption that underlies the ideas in *Borderlands*, but it is also enacted in the author's montage style, the literary equivalent of hybridity: a mixture of frames of reference, subjects, genres, languages, and styles. Guadalupe personifies hybridity—is herself a kind of montage—because she provides "a synthesis of the old world and the new, of the religion and culture of the two races in our psyche, the conquerors and the conquered" (B 52). As the etymology of the author's last name suggests, she herself is a Guadalupe figure who brings dualities together. *Anzaldúa* "is a Basque name, where 'an' means above, the upper worlds, the sky, the spirit [eagle]; 'zal' means the underworld, the world of the soul, of images, of fantasy [serpent]; and 'dúa' is the bridging of the two; and the bridge, to me, is the interface" ("Creativity" 103). "I span abysses," she states in "La Prieta" (209).

## Conclusion

In a similar way, this essay bridges *Borderlands* and theories from Jung and Hillman in order to deepen the case for depth psychology's contribution to Anzaldúan hybridity. A reading of her relationship to *Re-Visioning Psychology* may receive one further gloss via through the story of Juan Diego and the Virgin Mary in chapter 3, "Entering Into the Serpent" (B 50). The story also functions as a parable of Anzaldúan spiritual activism. A fuller version, including Juan Diego's several trips to the skeptical bishop named Juan de Zumárrago, is written by Luis Lasso de la Vega. Here is a summary of that version:

According to Mexican tradition, a dark-skinned woman, dressed in pink with a turquoise veil, appeared at Tepeyac [sic], north of Mexico City, in 1531 to indigenous Juan Diego. She sent the reluctant Juan to ask the bishop to build a temple in her honor, but his requests were denied. When Juan avoided Guadalupe because his uncle [Juan Bernardino] was dying, she appeared and told him not to be afraid because his uncle was cured. As a sign, she gave him roses, which he took to the bishop in his *tilma* (tunic). When he displayed the flowers, her image appeared on his *tilma*. In response, the bishop built a chapel honoring Guadalupe. The Spaniards, unable to understand the indigenous name for the woman, called her "Guadalupe." The title "Our Lady of Guadalupe" designates her as an appearance of the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus. ("Guadalupe")



Juan Diego, who shuttles back and forth between Tepeyác (also called Guadalupe) and the bishop's location, acts as a bridge and signifies *nepantla*. Through his in-between agency, binaries meet and start to interact: upper and lower classes, city and country, male and female, human and divine, the bishop's intellect (eagle) and the virgin mother's several numinous appearances as well as her miraculous cure of Juan's dying uncle (serpent). The roses, which Juan harvests in cold weather on rocky ground in the poem, thorny ground in de la Vega's account, provide the miraculous sign (the image) that the bishop needs in order to believe that Juan Diego has indeed seen the mother of God. Because the bishop recognizes the roses, the Virgin's portrait, and Juan Bernardino's renewed health as physical evidence of divine agency, he finally accedes to the virgin mother's wish that a temple be built in her honor.<sup>7</sup>

Anzaldúa speaks of "a third element which is greater than the sum of its severed parts [and which] is [or reflects] a new consciousness—a *mestiza* consciousness" (B 101–02). In the Juan Deigo story, the temple is a new third thing that is greater than the sum of the opposites it unites, where worshipers will practice a Catholic faith renewed by the Church's recognition of one man's numinous experience. The binaries of personal experience and religious institution, once opposed, now validate each other in the spirit of Anzaldúa's wish that we "see through serpent *and* eagle eyes" (B 100–01; emphasis added). Further, the Guadalupe story illustrates Anzaldúa's spiritual activism, in which inner change (Juan's inner response to his numinous experiences) enables outer action leading to change in society (the bishop's agreement to build a new place of worship), as well as the placement of oppositions in a holistic perspective.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, the new house of worship, Guadalupe herself, and *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* are all monuments to—that is, they illustrate and enhance—the hybridity and the holistic Borderlands/*mestiza* consciousness that Anzaldúa seeks to bring about by advocating a more fully cultural and spiritual nexus than Hillman sets out. He, like the bishop, is an intellectual authority; but like Juan Diego, Anzaldúa and her text embody and enact the change that she seeks to inspire in her readers. By mediating between opposites, she creates a new third thing—*Borderlands*, the text—that acknowledges but transcends binary points of view. The story of Juan Diego, then, is an allegory of Anzaldúa's larger project, for *Borderlands* re-visions and reworks Jungian thought and Hillman's *Re-Visioning Psychology* by putting greater emphasis on the connections among matter, psyche, and spirit; providing a corrective for white/Western culture's skeptical rationalism; elevating the less-privileged; and depicting a hybrid whole that transcends its component parts.

### Contributor

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> For example, Norma Alarcón mentions "Jungian psychoanthropology" in her discussion of the Shadow-Beast, which she identifies as "polyvalent" and as related to qualities such

as nonrationality and the Lacanian unconscious (47, 49, 52). Following Hillman's *Re-Visioning Psychology*, Erika Aigner-Varoz holds that metaphors arise from the collective unconscious and have powerful effects on persons' self-image (49, 60). She too comments helpfully on the Jungian shadow and Anzaldúa's "Shadow-Beast," emphasizing that "[t]ogether, the Shadow-Beast and *la facultad* create a mestiza [sic] consciousness" that deconstructs exclusionary metaphors (52, 55, 59–60). María DeGuzmán's discussion of the Jungian shadow is sketched in section one below. Anzaldúa herself references Hillman in an interview with Linda Smuckler ("Turning Points" 37) and in her posthumously published *Light in the Dark* (176–77). The relevant passage from her interview is quoted below.

<sup>2</sup> The same point appears in Keating's article, "'I'm a Citizen of the Universe': Gloria Anzaldúa's Spiritual Activism as Catalyst for Social Change" (60).

<sup>3</sup> Hillman uses similar metaphors in a paragraph on "imaginal reality" and "imaginative soul": "all unknown psychic capacities . . . lie waiting, drawing us seductively, uncannily inward to the dark of the uncut forest and *the deeps below the waves*" (42; emphasis added).

<sup>4</sup> The portrait of the feminine and the masculine that emerges in *Borderlands* has fueled accusations of essentialism (Yarbro-Bejarano 12, Rochel 233).

<sup>5</sup> For a history of Chicanos, see Rodolfo Acuña's *Occupied America*. For César Chávez and the United Farm Workers, see 268–78.

<sup>6</sup> Carrasco and Sagarena understand the distinction to be between logos and mythos. Insofar as Anzaldúa incorporates both, she is said to be "loca-centric" (226).

<sup>7</sup> Socorro Castañeda-Liles surveys the scholarship on Guadalupe in "Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Politics of Cultural Interpretation." She accurately states that Anzaldúa associates Guadalupe with the Aztec goddess Tonantzin; however, the Juan Diego story calls into question the critic's statement that Anzaldúa "completely . . . dissociate[s] Our Lady of Guadalupe from traditional Catholic thought" (167–68).

<sup>8</sup> For spiritual activism, see Keating, "'I'm a Citizen of the Universe': Gloria Anzaldúa's Spiritual Activism as Catalyst for Social Change"; and Lara, "Bruja Positionalities."

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## **Spirit Rattles (series)**

### **Earth Rattle**



### **Fire Rattle**



**Water Rattle**



**Wind Rattle**



Jane Hendrickson



## Jung and the Neurobiology of the Creative Unconscious

Jonathan Erickson

*Abstract:* The Jungian theories of creativity, like much of Jungian psychology, emphasize the relationship between the conscious mind and the unconscious. This paper explores and elucidates the intriguing parallels between this Jungian framework and recent models that have emerged in the neuroscience of creativity.

*Keywords:* Jung, creativity, neurobiology, neuroscience, unconscious, flow

### Introduction

Creativity is, and perhaps will always be, a great mystery. Though explanations will be given and measurements will be made, the simple phenomenon of something new coming into being is at heart akin to the miracle of life itself. Some may be content with technical explanations and strictly materialist accounts, but for many more, the glimmer of mystery remains.

Jung's psychology, built largely around the concept of the unconscious, keeps the doorway at least partially open to such mysteries. The unconscious is by definition, after all, that which we do not really have much awareness of. It is the great unknown within. As Jung once beautifully put it:

Consciousness, no matter how extensive it may be, must always remain the smaller circle within the greater circle of the unconscious, an island surrounded by the sea; and, like the sea itself, the unconscious yields an endless and self-replenishing abundance of living creatures, a wealth beyond fathoming. (1946/1954, p. 178, para. 366)

The language here is hardly in reference to a bleak existential void of unknowing. In Jung's conception, this void is filled with possibilities and potentials, a psychological cornucopia waiting to be discovered. Like so much else in his psychology, Jung's accounts of creativity were based in this ongoing discourse between the conscious mind and unconscious within.

On the other side of the spectrum, a tension exists between strictly materialist accounts of humanity and the mysteries of the vast unknown, a tension often on display in those branches of neuroscience that attempt to find neurobiological accounts of the essential aspects of the human psyche. Prominent among such endeavors are the attempts to produce a neurobiological model of creativity. Both creativity studies and neuroscience have undergone tremendous growth in recent decades, and a great number of theories abound to try to capture and explain the complex and perplexing phenomena of the human act of creation.

Rather than laud one approach over the other, this paper will explore and outline the parallels between Jung's conception of the creative unconscious and some recent neurobiological models for human creativity. These frameworks are not identical, nor



should they be. But there is a surprising degree of common ground. By elucidating these common connections, both fields of study can be enriched and perhaps even come to find a deepened respect for one another.

### **Jung, Creativity, and the Unconscious**

For Jung, creativity and the unconscious were inextricably linked. “New thoughts and creative ideas can appear which have never been conscious before. They grow up from the dark depths like a lotus, and they form an important part of the subliminal psyche” (1961/1976, p.198, para. 449). The metaphor of the lotus speaks of something beautiful arising out of the dark unknown depths of the psyche, notably not something that the conscious mind is doing or making happen. Rather the conscious mind observes, and is perhaps surprised, to see something meaningful arise from within what previously did not seem to exist. Creativity, in this sense, is not the work of the conscious ego, though ultimately it may well be for the conscious ego to decide what to do with the creative gifts from below.

This idea that creativity is something beyond, or more than, the rational mind appears several times throughout Jung’s works. “The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with the objects it loves” (1921/1971a, p.123, para. 197). Again, there is strong sense that creativity exists beyond the grasp of mere intellectualism and instead taps into something deeper, perhaps even primal. At the same time, Jung introduces the concept of playfulness as equally essential, further rebuffing the notion that creativity can be an entirely dry, analytical affair. “Without this playing with fantasy no creative work has ever yet come to birth. The debt we owe to the play of the imagination is incalculable” (1921/1971b, p. 63, para. 93). Fantasy and imagination become the realm where new possibilities can emerge. As long as things remain completely rigid and fixed, there is no room for something new to come into existence. Playfulness requires flexibility and implies a capacity for holding things and ideas lightly. At the same time, the language here still implies some distance between the observing ego and the imagination. In the above quotation, imagination is not something that we do; rather imagination is something we owe a debt to, as though it were a third party generously providing us with the raw materials for our creative work.

Jung often alluded to a real sense of wisdom in the unconscious—a deep capacity for resolution, growth, and healing that naturally unfolds as we get more fully in touch with ourselves. In working with dreams, for example, he would sometimes encourage his patients to engage with the material through some kind of artistic expression as a means of discerning deeper insight. “Often the hands will solve a mystery that the intellect has struggled with in vain” (1957/1969, p. 86, para. 180). Here again is the theme of a certain amount of surrender to an unconscious creative process, allowing it to express itself without too much conscious analysis or interference. Jung named his psychotherapy technique *analytical psychology*, so we can presume that at various points a more analytical process would come into play. But in the moment of creative art-making as a means to engage further with the unconscious, just the opposite is called for: a willingness to set aside rational analysis and allow something deeper to flow through.

So much of Jungian psychology proceeds by bringing the conscious mind into contact with the unconscious and even more so by facilitating a “mutual penetration of the conscious and unconscious” (1934/1954, p. 152, para. 327). It is a conjunction in which both parties are vital. Without a stabilizing rational ego to contain the conscious mind, encounters with the unconscious would be tantamount to a descent into madness. But without access to the depths of the unconscious, the conscious mind is a stranger to itself, inexorably set in its ways. The point is not to promote one over the other but rather to find a balance, a dialogue, and ultimately some degree of integration. From this inner alchemy, Jung believed, a genuine process of psychological transformation is possible.

This meeting between consciousness and the unconscious mind is so central to Jung’s psychology that it is difficult to discuss his understanding of creativity without it. And as this paper will demonstrate, his concept of the necessary balance between consciousness and the unconscious holds a surprising number of parallels to contemporary accounts of creativity in the neurosciences.

### Contemporary Theories of Creativity

The interdisciplinary field of creativity studies has experienced tremendous period of growth over the last two decades. From 1999 to 2009 alone, over 10,000 papers were published on creativity spanning multiple disciplines (Kaufman and Beghetto, 2009). I wrote my own bachelor’s thesis on interdisciplinary creativity at UC Berkeley in 2004, and since that time the topic has never ceased to fascinate me personally or professionally.

The basic definition used most often used in contemporary creativity studies is that something can be considered creative if it is both *novel* and *useful* (Carson, 2010; Vartanian, Bristol, & Kaufman, 2013). Thus, thinking up an idea or image that has no discernable use does not qualify as creative. Nor does making a thing that serves no purpose. Of course, the purpose and use of an idea or thing does not have to be pragmatic or material—it could be philosophical, educational, aesthetic, entertaining, and so on. A terrible idea or contraption can still make for a good joke. And by the same definition, an idea or object can be very useful without necessarily being creative—if it is simply an imitation of something that came before. Part of the fascination of creativity is that it implies a process whereby something emerges from nothing; a new thing now exists because of the creative process, something that had not existed in quite that form beforehand.

Some definitions of creativity are quite stringent. For example, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s (1996) landmark study on highly creative individuals required that all participants had made a major contribution to their field. Thus, any instances of personally meaningful creativity or creative projects that only transform the life of an individual or community were not considered. Csikszentmihalyi was in this case studying what is sometimes called *extraordinary creativity*, the kind that is associated with great artists, scientific geniuses, and masters of business and politics. But contemporary discourse has come to consider a much broader understanding. In addition to extraordinary creativity, Nancy Andreason (2005) talks about the importance of *ordinary creativity*—the day-to-day creative thinking that we all employ over the regular course of our lives. Much research in neuroscience has been more concerned with the latter,

particularly because it is not easy to measure extraordinary works of creativity by any clear objective standard, much less find an adequate sample size. In *Wired to Create*, Kaufman and Gregoire (2015) take a stand for creativity as a basic human birthright, something that we all have access to—though they acknowledge that some people certainly cultivate and develop their creative capacities more than others. Depending on how it is used, Creativity can be strengthened like the muscles of the body or be ignored and left to lie fallow like an empty field.

The *classical* theoretical model for creativity, still debated today, is usually attributed to either Helmholtz (1896) or Wallas (1926). This model holds that creative work takes place in four stages: 1) preparation, 2) incubation, 3) illumination, and 4) verification/elaboration. The preparation phase includes research and planning, whether learning the intricacies of a scientific problem or immersing oneself in life to find the raw materials for an artistic project. The second and third phases, incubation and illumination, are linked. Incubation occurs when we remove conscious attention from the project, allowing it to gestate for a time with a relaxed focus. Gestation, in theory, eventually leads to a moment of illumination, when new solutions, ideas, images, and stories emerge suddenly into consciousness, as if out of nowhere. The parallels to Jung's notion of the lotus arising from the depths should be obvious. Finally, in the fourth phase, these creative insights are either subjected to further verification and testing or are integrated into the work through a process of elaboration. The entire process is easily conceived in a cyclical manner, with ongoing iterations of preparation, incubation-illumination, and elaboration as the work continues.

There is ongoing debate as to the efficacy of this model, with some criticizing it for being too simplistic and not applicable to all creative processes. Nevertheless, it bears mentioning because elements of the classical model continue to show up in contemporary studies, as the following sections of this paper will show. One notable aspect of the classical model is that it implies a necessity of balance between conscious processes (preparation, elaboration) and unconscious processes (incubation-illumination), something that is born out both in Jungian theory and several modern neurobiological models of creativity.

For example, this notion of balance between conscious and unconscious is paralleled in Dietrich and Haider's (2017) neurobiological theory of *deliberate* and *spontaneous* creativity. Deliberate creativity refers to the process of consciously working on a problem or project through a combination of analytical discernment and rational planning and decision-making. Spontaneous creativity, on the other hand, refers to the generation of ideas, images, and solutions outside of deliberate conscious control. Dietrich and Haider insist that although these two types of creativity almost always work together, they are in themselves distinct neurobiological processes and must be studied as such. A similar division is described by Gregoire and Kaufman (2015), who divide the brain's creative capacity into processes of *generation* and *selection*. In the generation phase, new ideas and images arise without being consciously controlled. The selection phase is where the conscious mind comes in, sorting through the ideas and images generated and working them into the creative process in a more deliberate and rational way.

### **Neurobiological Accounts of Conscious Creativity**

There has been considerable pushback in recent years against the idea that creativity can be discretely located in one brain region or another. Because a given creative process could draw on many different kinds of information and information processing, holistic or global accounts of creative brain function are proving increasingly popular. Kaufman and Gregoire (2015) declare from the outset that “The creative process draws on the whole brain” (p. xxvi). Pfenninger (2001) argues that creativity is among the highest of brain functions precisely because it involves the complex integration of so many other functions that might not directly engage each other during non-creative processing. Likewise, Carson (2010) writes that “there is, of course, no ‘creativity’ center in the brain . . . creative cognition is a complex mental phenomenon that involves multiple sequential acts that utilize widespread circuits in the brain” (p. 45). Carson does, however, outline a map of multiple interacting brain systems vital to creativity, including some, such as centers associated with judgment, planning, motivation, and language processing, that are more typically associated with normative, non-creative cognition. Arne Dietrich (2007) has been especially critical of any search for a discrete or monolithic creativity center in the brain, commenting that “we might as well try to locate the neural centers for thinking” (p. 24).

Nevertheless, there are several extant streams of research and discourse over which areas and functions of the brain seem to make the greatest contribution to creative work. Among these, perhaps the most well known is the theory that the right hemisphere of the brain is the creative hemisphere, while the left brain is the analytical hemisphere. Like many popular theories and myths, this idea grows out of a kernel of truth, in that the right hemisphere does appear to be more specialized for holistic, global, and associative processing of the big picture, while the left hemisphere is more specialized for linear analysis and processing discrete particulars (Kaufman et al., 2010). The earliest evidence for this theory comes from the research of Roger Sperry (1974) into split-brain patients—individuals who had had the corpus callosum connecting the right and left hemispheres severed, meaning that each hemisphere was essentially processing information independently of the other. Because, when tested, the right brain was observed to be better at holistic thinking, it was labeled as the more creative of the two.

Ultimately, this interpretation has not withstood the test of time. McGilchrist (2009) reviews evidence that individuals with the split-brain condition show diminished levels of imagination and creativity, and concludes “the integrated functioning of both hemispheres is needed for such activity” (p. 198). Likewise, after reviewing the recent evidence that the hemispheres are indeed specialized, Kaufman et al. (2010) nevertheless conclude that creativity requires “the sequential and interactive engagement of both hemispheres, an interdisciplinary engagement between two ‘experts’” (p. 222). In other words, the right hemisphere needs the linear analytical specialization of the left in order to provide direction and discernment, while the left hemisphere needs the holistic specialization of the right to transcend its own limited analysis and effectively engage with the big picture. Again, balance and integration are essential.

A related body of theory is organized around the idea that creativity requires a disinhibition function in the brain, meaning that creative brain states tend to be naturally inhibited until the disinhibition function activates. In the late 20th century research by

Colin Martindale found that creativity correlates with reduced activity in brain regions associated with the inhibition of “abnormal” behavior (Kaufman et al., 2010). In reference to the more poetic language of depth psychology, clear parallels emerge here to the idea of the ego necessarily giving up control, and to some extent surrendering, to the unconscious. For Freud, this might be a matter of the superego stepping back to allow the libidinal energies of the id to flow freely. But Jung expanded the notion of libido to encompass the wider range of human experiences, including the creative and spiritual, and this more expansive construct also maps relatively well onto the current evidence for the disinhibition hypothesis.

More recent studies into disinhibition have kept the theory alive. Radel et al. (2015) found evidence that idea generation increases as inhibition decreases. R.E. Jung and Haier (2013) looked at frontotemporal dementia and brain lesion studies in relation to creativity and found that “lower brain integrity within left hemisphere brain structures—particularly left anterior temporal and inferior parietal lobes—serves to “disinhibit” other brain regions associated with increased novelty generation” (p. 243). Incidentally, this finding does inadvertently add fuel to the fire with regards to viewing the analytical left brain as a potential antagonist to creative output. R.E. Jung and Haier ultimately interpret their evidence to argue for “a decidedly left-lateralized, frontosubcortical, and disinhibitory network of brain regions underlying creative cognition” (p. 244). In a similar study looking at neurodegenerative disorders, Vishkontas & Miller (2013) concluded that “diminished language function via neurodegenerative diseases that target the left frontal or left anterior temporal lobes sometimes leads to the emergence of previously unrecognized visual or musical creativity” (p. 128). So, although some key aspects of left-brain function may be vital to a well-rounded creative process, it appears that an overly robust left brain can indeed get in the way.

Another popular theory in the neuroscience of creativity has focused on the role of the prefrontal cortex (PFC). Because the PFC is associated with planning, discernment, and rational decision-making, it seems a common-sense conclusion that any deliberate creative project would make extensive use of this area. The key word here, of course, is deliberate: many artists and even scientists report that creative breakthroughs happen outside of conscious deliberation. Arne Dietrich and his colleagues have done quite a bit of work to reconcile this contradiction by developing a neurobiological model that differentiates between *deliberate* creativity and *spontaneous* creativity (Dietrich & Haider, 2017). Ultimately, both forms of creativity are vital and necessary, and they often have to work together, but Dietrich has been a staunch advocate for recognizing them as separate but interconnected processes in the brain. With regards to deliberate creative process, Dietrich (2004) points specifically to the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC), which appears to be the seat of working memory—the place where the brain holds relevant information while actively working on a project. At the same time, the actual workspace of working memory is limited, meaning that the conscious mind can only hold onto and work with so much information at a time. In order to keep working and looking for new ideas, images, and solutions, the working memory must access the sensory and association cortices, which operate outside the purview of direct conscious control, hence spontaneously. This is again an instance of the conscious mind turning toward the non-conscious processes of the brain for support.

A similar neurobiological account of creativity was given by Damasio in 2001. Here he talks about the spontaneous generation of images (a term he uses somewhat synonymously with ideas), and the role that the prefrontal cortex plays in sorting through them:

The images are not realized as such in the prefrontal cortices—but rather in the early sensory cortices—but they are conducted or ordered from there . . . I suspect that a marvelous prefrontal cortex generating many new items and holding them ‘on line’ would be of little use if we did not have the ability to execute good selections based on aesthetic or scientific goals. (p. 65)

The raw materials for creative work arise from the non-conscious activities of the sensory and association cortices, and they are then evaluated and worked over by the prefrontal cortex. Both aspects of this process are indispensable: without the PFC, the flow of images and ideas would be endless and amorphous. But without the contributions of the non-conscious brain regions, the PFC would have almost nothing to work with.

Dietrich and Haider (2017) further point out that the workspace of the PFC is constrained not only by limits on conscious processing—but also by biases and assumptions of all kinds. Specifically, the ventromedial prefrontal cortex is associated with managing emotional and social considerations and rules, and this factor can further shape and limit the kinds of ideas, images, and solutions that are deemed acceptable. We all have sets of beliefs and assumptions about what is real, what is possible, and what is acceptable, and these beliefs and assumptions can considerably limit any and all creative output.

Being at the top of the neural pyramid, the prefrontal cortex also houses a person’s cultural values and belief system. This gives the deliberate mode—initiated and supervised by the prefrontal cortex as it is—a number of critical built-in predispositions as it generates new ideas . . . the deliberate mode is, for all its sightedness, pretty useless when the solution violates something we think is true about the world. (Dietrich, 2015, pp. 150–151)

Thus, a creative process that emphasizes the deliberate mode is useful for common-sense analytical solutions within the context of well-defined systems but not so good at major revelations, artistic breakthroughs, or new ways of looking at a problem. Dietrich and Haider (2017) ironically summarize: “While the deliberate mode has the advantage of limiting the solution space, it has the disadvantage of limiting the solution space!” (p. 5).

This constraint, of course, begins to push up against the very idea of creativity. If creative process is supposed to result in something novel and useful, the closed deliberate process of the PFC is only going to go so far. For a true experience of something wholly original emerging in the process of creative work, we must turn to regions of the brain that exist outside of conscious control.

### **Neurobiology of the Creative Unconscious**

There is now a general consensus that the vast majority of what goes on in the brain does not reach conscious awareness. This notion is usually referred to with the

technical term *non-conscious processes*, although occasionally a neuroscientist will be a little more poetic about it; Damasio, for example, writes that “there is a subterranean underneath the conscious mind and there are many levels to that subterranean” (1999, p. 319). If creativity is indeed a whole-brain process, and much of the brain is operating in this unconscious subterranean, it follows that a great deal of creativity must rely on the unconscious. Dietrich’s (2004) model for deliberate creativity claims that “the working memory buffer of the prefrontal cortex holds the content of consciousness and that the attentional network of the prefrontal cortex is the mechanism to select and limit the content” (p. 1016). The content itself, however, is not being generated by the PFC per se but by the vast non-conscious processes of the brain. For this reason Damasio (2001) argues that creativity requires “strong generation of representational diversity . . . the ability to generate—to bring to your conscious mind—a variety of novel combinations of entities and parts of entities as images” (p. 65). Furthermore, phenomenological inquires of all kinds have repeatedly reported that the creative contents generated by the unconscious are not always unformed chaos. On the contrary, human experience tells us that creative ideas and images can show up in varying degrees of complexity, from the chaotic and fragmentary to the sublime and whole (for examples and further discussion of this phenomenon, see Cameron, 1992; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Gilbert, 2015).

Several references have been made thus far to the association cortices, areas in the frontal, parietal, and temporal lobes that seem to be involved in connecting ideas. Pfenninger (2001) characterizes the association areas of the cortex as structures showing “extensive connections with other areas of the cerebral cortex and specialized for holding ‘mental images’” (p. 96). Andreasen (2005) further notes that the association cortices are marked by “a more complicated columnar organization than other parts of the brain” that are designed to connection information “in potentially novel ways” (p. 73). Although she does not reference the disinhibition hypothesis directly, she offers a similar theory in that, once the association cortices get going, they are no longer constrained in the way a common-sense thought process would require. These regions begin “running unchecked, not subject to any of the reality principles normally governing them” (p. 77). In theory, this process allows for ideas, images, and solutions that are outside of the ordinary, transcendent to limiting beliefs, and well beyond anything a deliberate conscious thought process is likely to come up with.

Perhaps the most sophisticated theory of unconscious association processes, as they relate to creative output, can be found in Gabora & Ranjan’s (2013) theory of *neurds*. This humorously titled term is used to refer to associative neural cliques within the vast networks of the brain. Their theory rests on the “distributed, content-addressable architecture of memory” (p. 22), which bears further explanation. The fact that memory appears to be *distributed* throughout the brain means that the various aspects of a given memory are actually spread and stored in different cortical regions. So, for example, the memory of a day at the beach with the family will have its visual components stored in the areas that process vision, the salty smell in the olfactory areas, the sounds of the waves in the temporal region, and so on. That memory is *content-addressable* means that ideas and images with similar features are stored together in associative neural cliques. In theory, it is only because memories are organized this way—with ideas and images stored in close association to other related ideas and images— that associative thinking is enabled

to begin with. Thus, while each piece of memory has its own dedicated network of neurons, each of those neurons also branches out into the vast expanse of related images and ideas.

Gabora and Ranjan (2013) assert that in a linear, analytical thought process the brain follows established informational pathways to arrive at a single piece of correct information. But in an associative thought process, it is not only the established connections of memory that are being accessed but also the wider network of associations attached to each piece of that memory. Neurds, then, are neural cliques “that would not be included in cell assembly if one were in an analytic mode of thought, but would be included if one were in the associative mode of thought” (p. 31). Such associations would only cloud and complicate a linear analytical thought process, but when analysis fails, the activation of the associative connections get the creative process going. “Their time to shine comes when one has to break out of a rut” (p. 31). For Gabora and Ranjan, this model settles the seemingly magical nature of creativity, whereby something emerges in the mind that did not exist previously.

Although the theory of neurds goes far in explaining how the brain recombines bits and pieces of information to make new ideas and images, it fails to address the extraordinary creativity seen in instances of artistic genius or scientific breakthrough. To remake a vision of the world requires more than putting a few ideas together in a new way. Andreason takes the discourse somewhat further in her discussion of complexity theory: “The human brain is perhaps the most superb example of a self-organizing system . . . it is constantly and spontaneously generating new thoughts, often without external control” (2005, p. 63). Complex, self-organizing systems are identified by their uncanny ability to become measurably more than the sum of their parts (Waldrop, 1992). By applying this model, higher order creativity in the brain might be understood as an emergent process resulting from the ongoing and simultaneous intercommunication of multiple association areas on a number of different levels. Despite being scientifically measurable, complex systems retain an air of mystery and magic through this phenomenon of self-organizing emergence and as such may prove a more comfortable middle ground for those who do not want to abandon creativity completely to strict materialist models. Furthermore, the notion of a complex, self-organizing non-conscious brain takes us far toward reconciling Jung’s notion of an inherently creative unconscious.

The above theories of associative thinking in the brain can help us to understand how creative ideas are generated in the present moment, but they do less to explain the time-delayed creative breakthroughs that the classical model described in the cycle of incubation and illumination (or insight). Although criticism has been leveled at the notion that incubation and insight are always present in successful creative projects, the phenomenon is too widely reported to be entirely dismissed. Csikszentmihalyi’s (1996) extensive study on highly creative individuals affirms incubation experiences as a common and important element for many who regularly practice creativity. Writing more recently, Kaufman and Gregoire (2015) argue that “research has supported the idea that the creative incubation that occurs during daydreaming is critical to creative thought and achievement and also to insightful problem solving” (p. 34). Dietrich (2015) too has emerged as a strong voice arguing for the plausibility of productive creative incubation:



“the fact that groundbreaking discoveries in science are the result of the mind idling in neutral should give us pause the next time we want to credit creative thinking solely to the higher cognitive functions of the cerebral cortex.” (p. 153). Such discussion gives more credence to the notion of an unconscious intelligence (as opposed to a merely non-conscious processes) if difficult problems are being worked out behind the scenes more or less all the time.

Dietrich and Haider (2017) have proposed a neurobiological account to help explain the incubation phenomenon. According to their theory, any active conscious processing on a project or problem carries with it a kind of neural inertia that continues even after the conscious mind has turned its attention elsewhere. “We can expect that a strongly interacting coalition of neurons does not instantly decay back to baseline. Any disintegration phase would take time, during which a new task set would be subjected to interference from the previous one” (p. 4). This would imply that a great deal of conscious focus on a problem would be a necessary precursor to incubation, as would repeated attempts to solve the problem. At best, however, this model functions as an explanation for incubation and insight in the medium-term only. It does not go far in explaining how the solution to a problem might emerge weeks or months after the project has been set aside.

## **Conclusion**

Jung is sometimes criticized in more materialist circles for characterizing the unconscious as a source of intelligence or wisdom. But even on this issue there is evidence enough to at least consider what kinds of intelligence might exist beyond the conscious ego. Kaufman and Gregiore (2015) assert: “The brain’s implicit processing system can, in fact, be very intelligent. Non-conscious processes may indeed be faster and structurally more sophisticated than our conscious thinking systems” (p. 66). Much research into this question remains to be done, and it is in the nature of such questions that they are extremely difficult to measure. Jung, of course, did not spend his life in the laboratory making measurements, but rather developed his theories through actual practice with living humans. His theories were born from clinical practice and introspection, and as such have a relational, imaginative, and sometimes outright poetic flavor that will never entirely fit with the dry technical language of the neurosciences.

Nevertheless, there is quite a bit in contemporary neuroscientific understanding to support Jung’s ideas about creativity and, I would argue, vice versa. That there is a limit to what the analytical and deliberate processes of the conscious mind can achieve is quite similar to Jung’s suggestion that intellect and conscious ego alone are not enough for creativity to occur. Likewise, though the terminology is different and the models more granular, the neurobiological recourse to non-conscious processes and associative thinking as a precursor to deliberate creativity is not unlike the lotus rising from the depths into conscious awareness. The latter just happens to be more poetic, and with good cause—for many people poetic, evocative language is far more resonant than the technical terminologies often employed in scientific discourse. Most importantly, the recognition by so many prominent neuroscientists that the conscious processes and unconscious processes of the brain must work together is itself a detailed neurobiological analogy for Jung’s “mutual penetration of the conscious and unconscious” (1934/1954, p.

152, para. 327). One does not have to believe that the brain is identical to the psyche to see meaningful and potentially fruitful parallels between the two fields

At the same time, we of the depth psychological persuasion might be mindful that we do not allow the current prominence of neuroscientific models to eclipse or, at worst, devour our field. Meditation worked for thousands of years before neuroscience validated it—it was an effective practice, long before it was objectively measured. So it is with depth psychology: we can celebrate communion with the neurosciences without dissolving and reducing the practices and understandings of depth psychology to neurobiological accounts. In the end, the psyche is not the brain; it is the psyche, a map all its own. As such, creativity can indeed be considered a birthright, and not just because many neuroscientists concur that it is so. It is a birthright simply because throughout the long stretch of human existence, from the first cave paintings and stories told by firelight, creativity has been a source of meaning and joy. It is part and parcel of who we are, something to be experienced and appreciated and known from within.

### Contributor

Jonathan Erickson, Ph.D., is a writer and life coach based in Portland Oregon. He completed his doctorate in depth psychology and somatic studies from Pacifica Graduate Institute, where his dissertation research focused on neuroscience and imagination. His previous publications include papers on psychology and religion, human-animal relationships, and virtual embodiment in video games.

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## Walled Woman

Tracy Ferron

*Touch me, she whispers. Touch me so I know I exist.*

With one eye gazing inward and one looking out at the world. You are suspended, immobilized, frozen.

*Cherish me, she demands, gnashing her teeth. She craves candlelit understanding, her heart hollow.*

When did this sacrifice begin? Your hair a tangled river teeming with bugs, unkempt, your still hands, fingernails curling in loops, setting in the plaster.

*Set, set, she cries, let this wall set so I don't have to make this continual choice to stay. Make it so. Seal my fate.*

Like an earthworm pressed on all sides by damp earth, the bricks support her. She welcomes their chilly pressure. The cement fills her mouth, her ears, presses against her breasts. She is held, suspended, known only to God.

*This house is built upon my bones and blood. Was it not I who created life, mixing the mortar of my own immurement? I, who know the moon and the mystery, danced with the sun. The blisters on my hands became scars, my fingerprints illegible.*

The poet continues to immure herself. Color dims. It is harder to conjure the magic. Over and over she tells herself this was her choice.

*When you know a deeper truth, they call you mad—she cries.*

These solid walls shelter her children. Yet she yearns to pierce the surface, pierce her own skin, let her fluids seep out and merge with it all.

*Touch me, she whispers. Touch me so I know I exist.*

## **Touch Me So I Know I Exist**



Tracy Ferron

## 2018 VISUAL ART AND ARTIST STATEMENTS



## **Spirit Rattles (series)**

Jane Hendrickson

### **Earth Rattle**



### **Fire Rattle**





**Water Rattle**



**Wind Rattle**



### Jane Hendrickson's Artist Statement

"Confront man in shapes of elemental spirits, in the rustling leaves, the murmuring of the roaring wind in the voices of the forest [the trickling waters and the rumbling earth] neither spiritual nor material but in-souled."

—Roberts Avens

Each Spirit Rattle is unique, utilizing and mythologizing the local landscape of Hawaii. The formation of the rattle is made over a river stone found by the streams of old riverbeds.

The images arise naturally from the gods and goddesses, along with animals, birds, and sea creatures. Each rattle is formed using the practice "waking dreams," a process where I begin with prayer and meditation shifting my thoughts from two-dimensional flat landscapes to three-dimensional. It is here the images of the mountains, volcanoes, caves and lava tubes, ash fields and riverbeds become alive and merge into the stories of old Hawaii.

In the ancient Hawaiian tradition called "Huna," stones and rocks were believed to have consciousness and to interact with the living. The Hawaiian saying, *Heola Ka Pohahu*, means there is life in the stone. Rocks, which hold mana as well as spirits, are sacred: In them are the gods and goddesses. The practice of Huna begins with "Ha," meaning breath. Using the energy practices of Huna, the artist tunes into the slow sensual aliveness in clay and stone.

Images are in the landscapes are found in caves, streams, mountains. In these sites that seem to have energy of their own, there are mosses, ruins, geological forces at work such as is the case of the Spirit Rattles which are made of earth: Black basalt from clay (the *prima materia*) deposits found on ancient sites; copper carbonate, clay deposits found in ash layers form white faces that develop out of the black earth. Fired and formed together. Our hands are the conduit of our consciousness hovering between anima and animus. Everywhere, and throughout history images of the psyche have become entangled with the physical environment.

Working with earth comes from the idea of the Great Mother who acts as the creatrix of all that is both male and female—the womb as vessel and body together in-souled and alive. The rattles are stones inside the womb waiting to be born, into persona who indwell within us and all living things.

Each Rattle is called

Each rattle is unique

Called to its owner

Called to me as its Creatrix

## **Mandala Play**

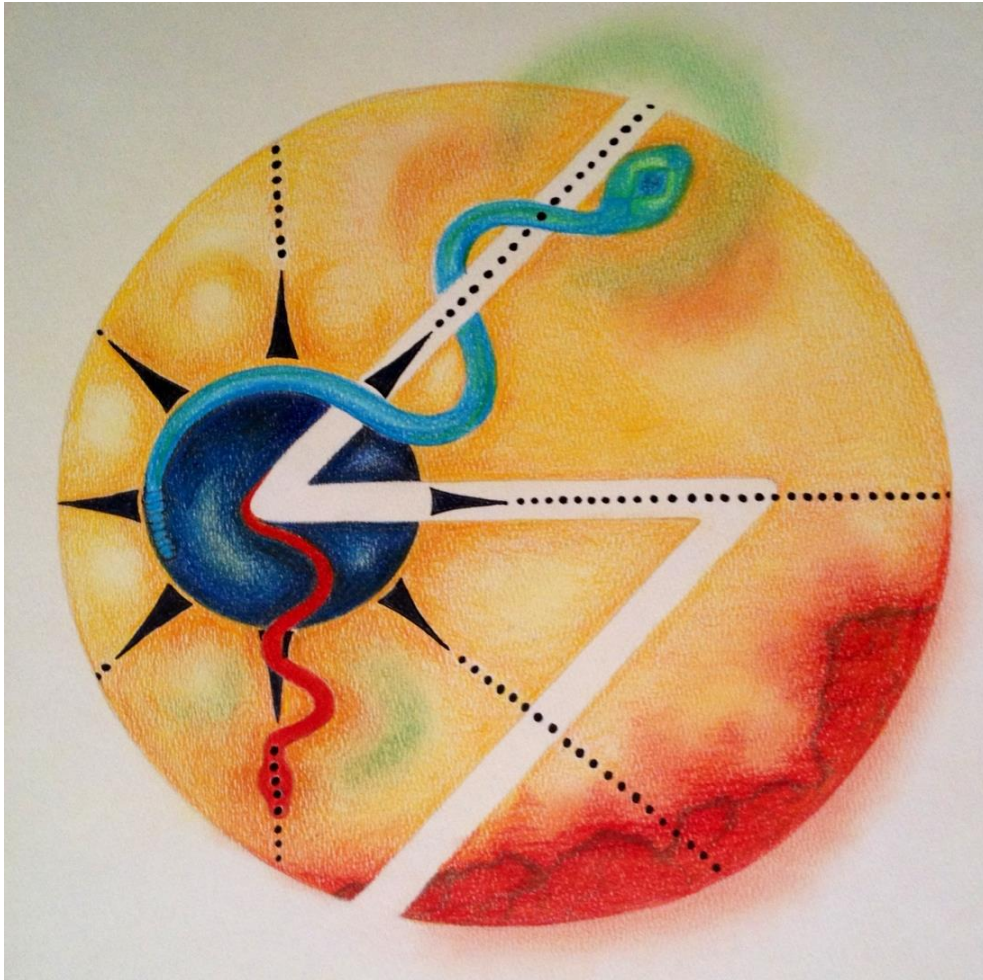
Elizabeth Eowyn Nelson

### **Sea Horse**





### **Serpent**



#### **Elizabeth Eowyn Nelson Artist Statement**

I began creating mandalas about 25 years ago for the sheer pleasure of the experience. To me, they were “doodles.” They still are. I begin with a blank circle traced on a page, gather a few colored pencils (less is more) and simply play. I have no idea what images will emerge, but once they do, I try to follow their lead faithfully.

The joy of doing something spontaneous, without intention or goal, schedule or structure, is profound. As time passes, I begin to hear only the sound of pencils on paper and I feel drawn down into something I can feel but barely describe. It is as though time passes into timelessness.

At first I was afraid of color. I had no artistic training and didn't know that a single pencil could, depending on how it is applied to the paper, become so many colors. I was also rule-bound, keeping strictly within the border of the circle, probably as a learned response to elementary-school instruction from long, long ago.

These two mandala doodles, *Sea Horse* (2010) and *Serpent* (2013), represent a literal breakthrough. The image seemed to want to move out beyond the circle, and so I followed it.

## **Black Snakes (series)**

Gelareh Khoie







### **Gelareh Khoie Artist Statement**

A few months ago, in active imagination, a series of black snakes all moving in one direction came along. They screamed “It is I” as they moved by me. They were moving along on a red and green background and looked as if they were made of a moving painting. These snake images stayed with me for some time until I decided to paint them. They are brand new; I just made them over the last two days.

In art school, I was often flummoxed by the never-ending demand to explain what my work was about. The best I could ever come up with was that my paintings appear to be psychic landscapes. This was a long time before I started attending Pacifica or studying Jung’s work seriously.

I’m grateful that here I can let the images speak for themselves, for they clearly have much to say; I am merely a messenger.

## Young Eve

Heather Taylor-Zimmerman





## Old Eve

Heather Taylor-Zimmerman



### Heather Taylor-Zimmerman Artist Statement

C. G. Jung (1973) said that sometimes a tree can tell you more than a book (p. 479), and trees featured prominently in *The Red Book* where the “growing one” is “the TREE of LIFE” (Jung, 2009, p. 351).<sup>1</sup> Declaring that, “No tree, it is said, can grow to



heaven unless its roots reach down to hell,” Jung (1979, p. 43) returned to the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Knowledge and Life in *The Red Book*. Here he and his soul took on the archetypal role of “the first people” who were “created directly from God” and thus “intentionally made” with the serpent “so” they would “have to sin” (Jung, 2009, p. 38). This theme of a return to the Garden was rooted in the earlier *Black Books* where Jung’s soul told him: “You are playing Adam and Eve with me” (as cited from *Black Book 4* by Shamdasani, 2009, p. 419). In an accompanying passage from *The Red Book* Jung’s soul also revealed herself as Eve or what Jung (1961) called the “soul in the primitive sense” (p. 186). Jung told his soul: “I am not the guilty one, since you have led me carefully along this way” (p. 419), to which his soul responded: “You might have rejected the apple” (p. 419). So the fall played out in *The Red Book*, casting the shadow of “enmity” on women (Genesis 3:15, The New King James Version).

*The Red Book*’s imagery unfolded when Jung (2009) “considered the essence of God,” and he “became aware of an image . . . of Eve, the tree, and the serpent” (p. 174). I likewise returned to the Garden and the image of Eve in the paintings of Eve, both young and old. First, the image of Young Eve emerged as a figure both innocent and wise, tender and yet ancient. In this image I imagine that she holds the seed of knowledge and life in her hand—or perhaps in her womb. This is a seed of carnal knowledge newly planted.

Is it Lilith, who is “wed to the serpent” as “the most ancient” (Jung, 2009, p. 424), dancing before Eve? Is this a dance of what Jung’s soul called “serpent wisdom” (p. 443) and the “golden seed” (p. 424)? I wonder: did Lilith initiate Eve who then initiated Adam? I do not know, but many years later the Old Eve reemerged in a vision during a women’s workshop on the day of the women’s march. Signifying “life” (“Eve,” 1987, p. 671) and the “animating presence” of the soul (Jung, 2009, p. 144), Eve remains, tending the garden. The tree in the second vision has grown roots that reach deep down to confront a hell on earth of our own making. Like Eve and Jung, we, as modern women and men, are called to return to the “the bright garden” (p. 182) in stewardship of the two trees that “grow from one root” (p. 183).

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> All italics and capitalization are from Jung.

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## **Walled Woman (series)**

Tracy Ferron

Photos: Lori A. Cheung 2017

### **Come Find Me**



### **Hearth Goddess**



### Joining Light and Dark



### Wise Repose





### In Service to the Eye



#### Tracy Ferron Artist Statement

My *Walled Woman* project examines the archetypal image of the immured woman, a woman sealed in or built into a wall. This provocative image came to me in a dream in which a young woman was sacrificed and immured, and I have chased this archetype throughout history, exploring her in poetic prose, conceptual art, and Jungian scholarship. I was shocked to discover a long lineage of immured women, ranging from women used as “foundation sacrifices” for bridges, temples, and public buildings—a global phenomenon—to the religious European Anchoresses of the medieval period who chose to be walled in adjacent to a church for life, or those punished with immurement for transgressing social mores or speaking out for justice (such as Antigone, the Vestal Virgins, or members of the Cathars’ religious sect).

Investigating centuries of female immurement took me on a deep dive into the meaning of the divine feminine, of sacrifice and rebirth, both personal and collective. Active imagination inspired both my poem “Walled Woman” and my photographic series *Walled Woman: The Sacred Emergence*, for which I constructed multiple brick walls in my Victorian home, in which to be photographed. This photographic series integrates reconstruction of iconography from the 1000-year old Indo-European folk ballad, “The Walled-In Wife,” alongside my conceptual artwork, *Walled Woman: Hearth Goddess*, and presents Walled Woman’s symbolic emergence from the wall through the release of a winged heart by the goddess who is immured in a bathtub.

In exploring the nature of the sacrifice of these women, I seek to uncover the mechanisms of power and fear in culture and in the individual and to explore how Jungian practices, particularly the creation of archetypal art, can offer not only an antidote to fear but a model for healing, emergence, and rebirth. To further explore my work, please visit my website at [www.tracyferron.com](http://www.tracyferron.com).

## **Hephaistos**

Marilyn Demario



### **Marilyn Demario Artist Statement**

This post-production photograph of Hephaistos, taken on a street corner in Asheville, North Carolina, is part of an ongoing project based on Joseph Campbell's observation that the gods and other human archetypes can be found "on the corner of 42nd St. and Fifth Ave. waiting for the traffic light to change."



## **Then She Did**

Genevieve Honorico-Dobrovolskis



### **Genevieve Honorico-Dobrovolskis Artist Statement**

My paintings are portals to investigate my psyche. The most fabulous images arise out of active imaginations or mythic inspirations. But more often, I paint to let my unconscious have a say, particularly when I am pathologizing or feeling especially neurotic. In simple terms, painting is self-care and therapeutic for me. Created in intuitive frenzy, the imagery emerges completely autonomous and separate from myself, revealing a new ontology.

*Then She Did* was painted with the moral support and encouragement from Susan Rowland, Maren Hansen, and Nancy Galindo, as part of a final paper for the Mythic Narratives class, during the summer of 2017. The painting was created using gouache and acrylic paints on a 16X20 canvas. The uroboros makes up the shoulders of this Mother Earth image who looks forward to the evolution of human consciousness and its place in the cosmos, as the past evolutions of Old Sun, Old Moon, and Old Saturn continue to feed the tree of Life, submerged and fed through the deep watery well of the unconscious.

## About the Artists and Poets

### **Marilyn DeMario**

Marilyn DeMario, a long retired professor of creative non-fiction writing, stalks the streets of Columbia, South Carolina, in the winter and Brevard, North Carolina, in the summer.

### **Tracy Ferron**

Tracy Ferron is a writer and conceptual artist. Tracy received her master's degree in engaged humanities from Pacifica Graduate Institute in June 2017 and is completing Pacifica's Dream Tending program. Her artwork has been exhibited in juried exhibitions in Marin County in Northern California. Tracy lives in Mill Valley, California.

### **Genevieve Honorico-Dobrovolskis**

Genevieve Honorico-Dobrovolskis is a Filipina-American artist, musician, teacher, wife and mother living in Carmichael, California. She is graduating the engaged humanities program at Pacifica Graduate Institute in Summer 2018.

### **Jane Hendrickson**

Jane Hendrickson, a mandala trainer from Tucson, Arizona, holds a Ph.D. in depth psychology and an MFA in art and teaching. In her work with clay, she uses active imagination and the ancient methods of Huna to create a change from clay to earth and then to stone, effecting the process of transformation or rebirth with a "Focus on the Fire."

### **Gelareh Khoie**

Gelareh Khoie is an artist, writer, and budding scholar residing in Roanoke, Virginia. She holds a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute, and is currently completing a master's degree in engaged humanities at Pacifica Graduate Institute. She is continuing on to the archetypal studies program next year.

### **Inez Martinez**

Inez Martinez writes poems, plays, and fiction. Recently, a selection of her childhood poems and art in response to them by Toby Needler has been published in *Childful Moments* (2018). Haiku, accompanied by artwork by Sowbel, has been published in *A Duckpond Season* (2016). Her Christmas play is available on YouTube through Googling Que Nochebuena-Staged Reading.

### **Elizabeth Eowyn Nelson**

Elizabeth Eowyn Nelson has been a writer and editor for four decades, and currently serves as core faculty at Pacifica Graduate Institute, where she has been teaching since 2002. She has published numerous articles and essays and two books, *Psyche's Knife: Archetypal Explorations of Love and Power* (Chiron, 2012) and a third edition of *The Art*



*of Inquiry: A Depth Psychological Perspective* (Spring Publications, 2017, co-authored with Joseph Coppin).

**Heather Taylor-Zimmerman**

Heather Taylor-Zimmerman is a professional artist who specializes in creating images of nature and mandalas of the sacred feminine. Currently in the dissertation phases of a doctoral degree at Pacifica Graduate institute, Heather has a B.A. in art history and a master's degree in archetypal psychology. Her work is found internationally in private collections and regionally in medical, governmental, and educational facilities.