

Archetypes on the Couch

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I want to start my paper with some theoretical assumptions and reflections, for it will give an idea of where I stand and how I think. The problem of bringing together theory and practice is a thorny one, and I cannot claim that I am anywhere near to having firmly and finally grasped that nettle.

I have entitled this paper archetypes *on* the couch; not *from* the couch nor *for* the couch but archetypes *on* the couch. In other words I want to explore the nature of the concept "archetype," look at it as one might look at a patient, listening and receptive to what is overt or covert, and explore its meaning, its function and the mood, feelings, and fantasies communicated by it, what experience of the subject, the patient, may characterize it as archetypal, and what reaction does such an archetypal experience evoke in the object, the observer, the therapist. Thus such an exploration will concern itself both with the nature of the experiences coming from the patient and with the responses and the interpretations given by the observing participant, the therapist.

The concept of the archetypes itself was born—or at least was con-

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ceived—as a result of that archetypal transference/countertransference clash, the war of the two giants, Freud and Jung. Jef Dehing, a colleague in Belgium, has made a fascinating study of their relationship, their love and their hate for each other, by analyzing the letters that passed between them. For instance, in February 1910 Freud writes to Jung:

True, what you write about it [symbolism] now is only a hint, but in a direction where I too am searching, namely *archaic repression*, which I hope to master through mythology and the development of language. It would be wonderful if you could do a piece on the subject for the *Jahrbuch*.

Or in June 1910 he writes:

Don't be surprised if you recognize certain of your own statements in a paper of mine that I am hoping to revise in the first few weeks of the holidays, and don't accuse me of plagiarism, though there may be some temptation to. . . . I conceived and wrote it two days before the arrival of your "Symbolism"; it is of course a formulation of ideas that were long present in my mind.

In January 1911 he ends a letter to Jung with:

I don't know why you are so afraid of my criticism in matters of mythology. I shall be very happy when you plant the flag of libido and repression in that field and return as a victorious conqueror to our medical motherland.

And in August of the same year:

. . . I have been working in a field where you will be surprised to meet me. I have unearthed strange and uncanny things and will almost feel obliged not to discuss them with you.

This is an allusion to the work prepared secretly that would become *Totem and Taboo*. Even as late as 1918 in his paper on the "Wolfman," Freud writes:

I have come to the end of what I had to say about this case. . . . The first relates to the phylogenetically inherited schemata, which, like the categories of philosophy, are concerned with the business of "placing" the impressions derived from actual experience. I am inclined to take the view that they are precipitates from the history of human civilisation.

The concepts of innate ideas and of "typical mythological forms" are obviously precursors of the notion of the "archetype." That this word should have become part of the exclusively Jungian nomenclature is one of the results of the "Great War," the war of the two giants.

"The archetype" is, of course, a concept, not a datum. It is a mental construction. It is a metapsychological model to account for the recurrence and apparent universality in humans of certain experiences and images, the archetypal images. Models are *ad hoc* provisional devices;

they are attempts to order or to assemble together a number of phenomena which have certain characteristics in common or which collect into an easily perceived pattern what is actually beyond our sensory grasp. We make, for instance, models of sub-atomic particles, or of astronomic, that is, stellar or planetary, constellations. Geographical maps are models; they allow us to catch in one glimpse a vast, extensive land mass, and inform us through agreed conventions of the political or the geological features involved. Where a model is a tangible object, like a map, there is little risk of confusing the model with actual reality. But when we are dealing with functions and qualities, as we do in psychology, the danger of confusing model and fact—the signifier and the signified—is very great indeed.

When one deals with a model, the question to ask is not, Is this true? Is this correct? Instead it is appropriate to ask: Is this model useful? Is it still useful? I will return to this question later.

Jung, being ever aware of the danger of confusing model and reality, insisted again and again that the archetypes are devoid of form and content; that they are non-perceptual and irrepresentable. He described them as psychosomatic or psychoid factors that cannot “as such reach consciousness until personal experience as rendered them visible” (Jung 1935, para. 846).

The word “archetype” thus denotes an abstract idea, pointing to the existence in man of the potential to have images, drives, fantasies, and emotions that are “archetypal” because they possess four principal characteristics:

1. universality across space and time, that is, across different cultures and epochs;
2. bipolarity, that is, they each carry both positive and negative complementary qualities;
3. powerful affects, such as fascination or feeling possessed, or experiencing something awesome—awesomely terrible or awesomely beautiful or awesomely significant, that is, spiritual, divine, numinous, and beyond conscious, rational comprehension;
4. an “all-or-nothing” quality; thus whatever is archetypal is experienced as stark, powerful, and absolute, as absolutely good or absolutely bad, as “bigger than big” or “smaller than small,” as “always” or “never.”

Archetypal processes, the commanding drives and the affectful images and fantasies that they release, ensure the survival, the maturation, and the development of the organism by acquainting it on the one hand

with its needs and, on the other, with the objects around it that can satisfy those needs.

Michael Fordham's work and formulations have, I think, increased our understanding of the possible roots, origin, and nature of the archetypal processes as they emerge and develop in the course of an individual's life. He has postulated the existence, at the beginning of life of an "original self," which is the primitive and therefore simple and relatively undifferentiated form of Jung's self. Both the "original self" as well as the "big self," that is, Jung's self, can be thought of as the storehouse of the archetypal images, themes, and drives. They lie, so Fordham has suggested, in readiness to be activated and to emerge through the spontaneous process that he has called "deintegration." It is through this process of deintegration that the original self differentiates and gives birth to the archetypal forms or, as Fordham has called them, the deintegrates, which then, like the scintillae in Jung's terminology, make up the nuclei of consciousness.

I see the relationship of Fordham's "original self" to Jung's big self as analogous to the simple fertilized cell, which, after innumerable divisions, becomes a living organism, composed of innumerable diverse cells and diverse functions.

Deintegration is a lifelong process. The various archetypal themes have each a "critical time" when their emergence is right and appropriate in terms of the stage an individual has reached in the life-cycle.

Through the process of deintegration the ego, defined by Jung as the center of consciousness, becomes differentiated out of the original self. For deintegration involves the development of specific modes of perception, imagery, drives, emotions, fantasies, etc., which search out and, if all goes well, discover in the environment the objects appropriate to them; this then makes experience, and even conscious experience, possible.

The organism is, as it were, programmed to develop deintegrative processes, just as the acorn is programmed to develop into an oak, given a good enough environment. The importance and the reality of this proviso—the good-enough environment—implies that there is inevitably mutual interaction and interdependence between the environment on the one hand and the individual's inherent and constitutionally determined programming on the other.

This interdependence of the objects external to the individual and the deintegrates, evolving from within the individual, makes possible the eventual humanizing of the archetypal themes and figures. This then links the individual's world of fantasy and imagination to his phenomenal, personal, and real world. Fordham made it clear that he has regarded

the concept of the deintegrates and the concept of the archetype as being more or less identical when he wrote:

In so saying he [Jung] implies that the origin of consciousness lies in the archetypes, and so we can conclude that deintegrates, if not identical with, are at least closely related to, them. (1955)

There is clearly some connection between Jung's concept of the archetypal and the ethologist's concept of the "patterns of behavior" and the "innate release mechanism." In fact, Elie Humbert has discovered that Jung himself, as early as 1938, had already observed an evident kinship between these two concepts, his own and that of the ethologists. Fordham also by 1955 had come to recognize the coincidence of these two concepts. He was intrigued, stimulated by it, and seemed to find it illuminating. He did indeed reflect upon it and pursued it further, particularly when he developed his concept of the process of deintegration.

My own study has led me to find an interesting parallel in the religions, particularly in Africa, to Fordham's triad—original self, deintegrate (or archetype), and ego. For I found that there is indeed an almost universal belief in the existence of what I would call a "cosmological triad": a great God who is unknowable, ineffable, and hence unworshipped; and his sons, or messengers, or what the Ashanti of Ghana have named "the pieces of God." Through these the Great God manifests himself in a form that can be intelligible and relatively familiar to men; and lastly there are the men themselves with their more or less conscious awareness. Jung had already explored the relationship between the psychological concept of the self and the religious ideas of God. My discovery of a cosmological triad in religious beliefs paralleling Fordham's triad in his concept of the structure of the psyche seems to make his thesis even more convincing, because it provides a mythological equivalent. Moreover, the parallel or equivalence between archetype-deintegrate and the messengers, "sons," or "pieces" of the Great God, could help us to understand better why archetypal experience is so often marked by a sense of containing and carrying something numinous. For each is liable to express wholeness; each is, as it were, a messenger, a piece of the wholeness—God or self—and so it can act as an agent of the synthetic and integrative process.

The term "deintegrate" is valuable, so it seems to me, because it reminds one of the origin and the process that brings them into being. In the early stages of their emergence they seem indeed to be as simple as are the IRM. However, as a deintegrate becomes admixed with what has been learned and experienced in the world of objects, persons, and cul-

tural artefacts, and as it moves towards consciousness and the ego position, so it becomes much more rich and complex. When this more evolved state has been reached, then, I would now suggest, it is really more appropriate to speak in terms of an archetypal process and an archetypal content.

The relationship between deintegrate and archetype has troubled me for quite a long time, for they evoke somewhat different moods and associations; yet they are obviously very closely related. It is by going back to my reflections which I described in a paper "Losing and Finding: The Location of Archetypal Experience" (Gordon 1985) that I reached the idea that archetypal forms and processes, being rich, enriching, and potentially numinous, are in fact hybrids, hybrids of, on the one hand, the simple deintegrate, which is primarily innate and intrapsychic in origin, and, on the other, of experienced and remembered objects and events. It is, I would now suggest, only those hybrids which have evolved beyond the character and status of a deintegrate that truly deserve to be acknowledged and named "archetypal"; while the deintegrates can be thought of as identical with the alchemists' "scintillae," those germs of consciousness, those "seeds of light," as Jung described them (Jung 1947, para. 388).

The interdependence of objects external to the organism and the deintegrate-archetype differentiating within the organism add another rationale to Jung's theory that when archetypal images detach themselves from the unconscious matrix, they can at first be experienced only—and so take the way to potential consciousness—in and through projection. While they are projected, they are perceived as if they existed only "out there," attached to something or somebody in the external world. They can of course also be identified with and be incorporated in a delusory manner into the self-image, but in that case it may prove to be more difficult for them to become recognizable as being archetypal contents.

When archetypal figures and images are either identified with or projected, they clearly distort the character of the actual objects or persons involved and so tend to endow them with the stark, absolute, and all-or-nothing qualities that mark them out as characteristically archetypal. Naturally this tends to vitiate relationships. It is probably because of this negative consequence that many analytical psychologists tend to think of "the archetypal" as being a primitive force from which we must free ourselves and which we must outgrow if we are to develop, assume our personal responsibilities, and enter into good, realistic, and mature relationships that are reciprocal and mutually satisfying.

However, although archetypal projections in the course of matura-

tion need to be withdrawn from actual objects and persons, yet to escape altogether from their impact on our experience—even if this were possible—would undoubtedly make life flat, dull, monotonous, stereotyped, and without sparkle, lustre, or adventure. For the archetypal processes do have a very important function. But they can fulfil this only if, instead of distorting objects and persons, they move into that part of the psyche that Winnicott called the “area of experience” or the “area of illusion.”

He has postulated that this third area develops out of the infant's experience of a transitional object. This is in fact its first creative act, because in relation to the transitional object the question, “Have you found it or have you made it?” is inappropriate, for the child has both found it and has made it into whatever meaningful object he or she needs and wants it to be. This area, so Winnicott has suggested, is then the source and bedrock of play, creativity, symbolism, and of the symbolic and hence of all art, religion, ethics, aesthetics, and so on. It is the crucible where fantasy and reality meet, fuse, de-fuse, and re-fuse. This third area, I would now argue, is the locus in the psyche appropriate for the functioning and experiencing of the archetypal processes. For these can enrich our inner world, enliven it, activate imagination, and restore to us a sense of the wondrous, the awesome, the mysterious, the poetic.

I mentioned above that Jung himself had recognized a “kinship” between his concept of the archetype and the ethologist's innate behavior and innate “release mechanisms.” Fordham conceived and elaborated further on this parallel. I, too, have felt impressed by it.

However, the archetypal imagery and the archetypal motifs that we meet with in our clinical practice are often much more intricate and complex than are the “releaser” and “behavior patterns” described and discussed by ethologists.

Some of these puzzles and confusions can perhaps be lessened or even resolved if we restrict the concept of “deintegrate” to the immediate products of the process of deintegration, for it is these that parallel the ethologist's “innate release mechanism.” The deintegrates emerge from the original self as appetites and instincts; consequently they search out and relate to part objects only like—at the beginning of life—breasts, nipple, eyes, warm holding arms, and to specific stimuli like milk, smells, the fearsome situation of falling; that is, to those objects and situations that either protect or else threaten survival. Fordham has described the deintegrate as

a readiness for experience, a readiness to perceive and act. . . . Only when the object fits the deintegrate can a correct perception occur (Fordham 1955).

But when the deintegrate or patterns of deintegrates on the one hand and the objects in the external world on the other have met and have begun to affect and modify each other, then we begin to deal with the hybrids, that is the archetypal contents, images, forms, feelings, and processes. Fordham has been particularly interested in what happens when object and deintegrate do not fit exactly, which is the condition that brings a dawning of consciousness and an awareness of a distinction between subject and object. And then, so he suggests, images no longer mirror precisely the objects they are supposed to represent; instead they change or recombine in various ways and so reflect both the internal psychic processes and the natural as well as cultural objects and events encountered.

It is in Winnicott's "area of illusion" that the hybrids, the archetypal processes, interact with those psychological functions—sensing, perceiving, remembering, thinking, etc.—through which we get to know reality. Here then is the source of the genuine and valid creativity which produces neither idiosyncratic, fanciful hallucinations nor mere copies of reality. Thus the rich and elaborate images we find in our clinical work, whether they occur as fantasies in dreams or in wakefulness, derive from the interaction and the interpenetration of processes from both the archetypal and the cognitive sources.

This thesis, so it seems to me, underpins Jung's belief, as I have already quoted above, that the archetypes themselves are devoid of content until "personal experience has rendered them visible" (Jung 1935, para. 846). It also makes sense of the fact that although many themes in dreams and myths are universal, the actual form they assume are distinct and vary from person to person, from culture to culture, and from epoch to epoch.

I use my own feelings, my sense of familiarity, and my associations to either myths, legends, and fairy tales, or to particular persons or events that the patient has previously talked to me about in order to assess the relative importance of the archetypal as against the personal-historical factors in the material a patient lives and brings to me. This "material" may be in the nature, character, and quality of our transference/countertransference interrelationship; it may be the patient's behavior and actions either inside or outside the consulting room; it may lie in his or her imagined themes, stories, figures, or personages.

Case History: Carolyn

I take as my first example of how this works out in clinical practice a young woman, Carolyn. She was 23 when she started an analysis that

lasted 7 years. She had been referred to me because she was haunted by compulsive thoughts that she would, and that she wanted to, kill those nearest and dearest to her if left alone with one of them.

Carolyn, born second, and Mary were fraternal twins. There were two brothers, one four years and one six years younger. The twins had been born six weeks prematurely. The parents were farmers, rather puritanical and perfectionist. As incubators were not near to hand, the twins were kept warm in an airing cupboard. Both were weak and delicate. Carolyn believed that at the start she was the weaker of the two; but, whichever of the two was thought to be at any given time the more delicate or the most endangered twin, that twin was put first to the breast. The one who had become the healthier had to wait. Mother feared that she would not be able to handle the babies all by herself, so there was also a nanny who helped to look after the twins. In this family it was the father who was the more maternal one. When the twins were six years old, the nanny was dismissed. Carolyn was never told why, but she remembers the nanny as a warm, affectionate person able to give the twins bodily comfort and affection. The parents would later talk about the nanny as sloppy and sentimental who, they feared, was spoiling the children.

One incident which Carolyn was told of but could barely remember herself happened when she was about four years old. It seems that she slipped into a pond that was on the farm; she could not yet swim and was actually in danger of drowning. Mary, it is said, gave the alert, the nanny rushed out, saved Carolyn, and revived her. I am sure that this traumatic experience expressed itself and was relived in many of her hypochondriacal and psychosomatic symptoms, such as her fear of fainting or choking, and her compulsion to stay awake at night in order to monitor her breathing and heart beat, which led to severe insomnia.

Soon after the beginning of her analysis, Mother told Carolyn that she had been expected to be the first born but that at the last moment the twin babies shifted position, so Mary was born first, and Carolyn was born half an hour later. The story—probably the myth—was told that Mary, the firstborn, did not breathe for half an hour, as if she had refused to enter into life until Carolyn also was born. On hearing this account of her birth, Carolyn was swept by a wave of resentment; she had been, she felt, pushed back by Mary and deprived of her birthright—to be the first born. This released in her, and led her to express, violent feelings of rivalry, though she would also try to contain and counter them: "Actually I am proud of Mary; I am glad she was the firstborn." This weak and unconvincing denial was a response not only to defend herself against guilt, but there was also considerable closeness between the twins who

often combined as a united front against the parents and could give one another some of the physical tenderness and affection that the parents failed to provide. When they were nine years old, the parents sent them to different boarding schools. Not only were the twins then separated, but their two schools each had a different ethos and educational theory.

When Carolyn first came to see me, I saw a hunched-up person "enveloped" in a large coat of indeterminate color. She looked crumpled up and bent over like a little old woman or like an embryo, as yet unborn. All her colors were gray or dull beige. She wore no make-up and had no particular hairstyle.

She would come into the room, quickly glance around, then look at me furtively as if she needed to reassure herself that I was really there. She often stared into space, her mouth hanging open; I felt that she had dropped into a "thought-hole." She spoke with a little voice, which made it difficult to hear her. This was undoubtedly significant because her mother had become very deaf at an early age; Carolyn had never known her otherwise. Was the soft voice in my room her attempt to prevent the transference on to me of her own mother? Carolyn was in fact a good musician, sang in a choir, played the cello and was an active member of an amateur orchestra that gave public performances.

The compulsive thoughts of killing someone—later referred to by her simply as "the thoughts"—had started suddenly one evening while she was making lampshades with her twin sister. The idea suddenly came to her. It struck her that the scissors she was using could turn into a weapon with which she could kill Mary. After the first appearance of "the thoughts," they stopped for about three months; but then they reappeared and stayed on. They used to come—almost punctually—at about 7:00 P.M. and stayed until late in the evening. They were directed mainly against her twin sister, Mary, but could sometimes be aimed at her mother and sometimes against anybody with whom she found herself alone, except her father, because, as she tried to explain, "He is stronger than I." Her fear of killing others was often turned also against herself; the method of killing was strangling or the use of a metallic weapons.

These killing fantasies, we soon discovered, also expressed omnipotent and omniscient fantasies: "You don't know that this is the last time that you brush your hair." "You don't know that in a few minutes you will be dead." She also fantasied that she was the worst, the most evil of murderers, and how the next day this would be proclaimed in the headlines in all the papers everywhere.

About one month after she started analysis, I felt, for the first time, the presence of "the thoughts" in my consulting room in relation to me. I sensed that Carolyn wanted to attack me, probably with a knife.

But—and this is strange—I did not experience any fear. It did not feel in the least eerie. Instead I felt that even if she attacked me, I would experience love and tenderness for her. As I am not particularly brave or heroic, my reaction was significant. It suggests to me that her “killing” was not just a sadistic-destructive act but was also an expression of a wish for fusion; a love-fight. I made no interpretations and I did not mention my own suspicions. However, almost immediately at the beginning of the next session my suspicious feelings were confirmed. Carolyn told me that she had had “the thoughts” with me and against me during the previous session, but after that she did not have them as usual in the evening. This was a relief, but she was sad and very anxious because she had experienced my room as a refuge and now it had become contaminated by “the thoughts.”

Only a week later Mary, her sister, was offered a job as an *au pair* girl with an English family abroad. This meant renewed separation of the twins. Immediately “the thoughts” gained in intensity and she experienced them as “stronger than they had ever been.” This confirmed my hunch that for Carolyn killing is also an expression of love and a desire for fusion and can be understood like the behavior of a sow who devours her young when danger threatens. Also, later in the analysis, she dreamed that her arms were coiled around Mary, not in order to attack, but as if to hug her. The next few weeks were preoccupied with thoughts that their characteristics, talents, and qualities were divided between them. She described Mary as extravert, sociable, intelligent, adventurous, on good terms with herself, more emancipated from the family, and therefore seemed to have all the advantages; while she, Carolyn, had all the disadvantages, being timid, shy, introverted, hating herself, and actually being disgusted by herself. But, and this was the odd but interesting twist, Mary, she thought, would not be strong enough to live and bear emotions like anger, envy, jealousy, and destructiveness as she, Carolyn, has to experience and battle with. She must protect Mary from them because she, Carolyn, is actually physically enormously strong, more like a man. That is, so she explains, what makes her so dangerous.

However, when, after a few months of analysis, “the thoughts” eased up, she began to feel “empty,” “insubstantial,” a “nothing.”

“It is better to be very, very bad than nothing at all.”

“I feel like a vacuum when there are no bad thoughts.” And indeed when she did not have to report “the thoughts” there were often long silences: I too had some difficulty in keeping my attention centered on her. And then a fantasy came to me that I must create her body, her person, out of myself.

One day, soon after this, there was the continuous noise of an elec-

tric drill just outside my house. I found it almost unbearable and feared its effects on Carolyn's session. But she looked almost happy and said that she really enjoyed it. And then a fantasy took shape in her and she described it:

You make a hole in order to repair something. It is like making a hole in the earth so that you can plant and put something new into it.

The fantasy developed and grew further:

I have a ramrod in my hand and with it I make holes into the walls—my walls—till the ceiling collapses on top of me. But that feels really cozy. I often want to make holes into someone's tummy; I would like to make a hole into your tummy then I can lie safely inside it.

A few days later she told me that she had recently seen a friend who is pregnant. "Perhaps the baby inside her has a knife so he can cut his way out of her."

Then she had an important dream: I, the analyst, go to a party with her family, and Mary goes too. But I, the analyst, have a sister who stays with Carolyn because Carolyn does not want to go to the party. My sister allows Carolyn to stay for a while in a very hot bath and then she can go to bed. She feels very lucky. This sister knows how to look after her and is very caring to her. It seemed to me that this dream was about being allowed an experience of being in the maternal womb, this time really on her own, without a twin to share it with. My "sister," who knows how to care, very likely represented the warm nanny.

A few weeks later she brought a dream about a hurt and hungry pack of wolves. She then began to talk also about her insomnia and that one of the reasons is a fear "in case I miss something." To this I added: "Perhaps you are afraid to miss a good feed and then Mary will get it. Each feed seems to you to be a matter of life and death." She received my interpretation with a little conspiratorial smile.

When well into her analysis, after about three years, she dared to become critical of her parents. There was a dream in which a witch, who wore a red dress, pursued her on her parents' farm. The witch had claws and could fly. If she caught Carolyn she would kill her, probably by choking her with her claws. By then Carolyn herself was able to recognize that the witch was her mother whom she now experienced as witch-like because she made Carolyn feel inadequate, inhibited, and the carrier of her mother's "shadow," because her mother needed so much to feel and be "good." Some time later she also became critical of her father. She dreamed that she was in a bar with her father. She wanted him to get her

something to drink. But he asked her where he could get this for her. She answered him "with sarcasm in my voice." This hostility and contempt for father was in part a defense against envy—envy of his penis, his phallus, his masculinity, which had been symbolized by her dream of the ramrod with which to make a hole into me, her analyst. She also envied his maternal capacities. Her envy and ambivalence in relation to her father expressed an attempt to make conscious and integrate her own masculinity. But she experienced this masculinity also as evil and destructive. This was made clear to us in a fantasy that developed during an analytic hour:

There is a box and I put something into it which I do not want to own. It is a lump of evil. There is also a man who goes into the box. It is a sort of self-sacrifice. He is tall but the box is small, so he has to curl up inside it. Somebody throws petrol over the box and sets it alight. Then it is dumped in the sea.

She returned to this fantasy a few sessions later but by then the man had transformed; he had grown fins and she described him as a "merman." This fantasy was followed by experiences of dizziness and a fear and a sensation that she had a lump or a "tumor" in her head. "It is as if I had a baby that was growing in my head instead of in my tummy."

It was only toward the second part of the analysis that she could begin to express her overt fear of death—of natural dying. Her fear of being killed, or of killing herself, or of killing others, and her many hypochondriacal—almost delusionary—experiences had been a constant theme. But only when more of a conscious ego had been formed could she speak directly of her thoughts and feelings about death. She had always resented, she had always been horrified that death must come to each of us. She knew that death is inevitable and believed it to be gruesome. It seemed that the existence of death, of our knowledge of its inevitability, offended her need for control and omnipotence because the uncertainty of when and how it will come was unbearable to her. Here perhaps lay also the reason for her state of apprehension as she improved and grew more mature and conscious, for it meant that the end of analysis was coming within sight. It seemed to bear out the fact to which Jung had drawn our attention when he wrote: "The neurotic who cannot leave his mother has good reason for not doing so. Ultimately it is the fear of death that holds him there" (Jung 1930).

What then are the features in Carolyn's analysis that I would regard as predominantly archetypal?

First and foremost there is the twinship. This recalled for me time

and again the story of Esau and Jacob: (1) There too was the importance of being the firstborn—though the second may, as it were, catch a ride from the first one, since Jacob was born holding on to Esau's heel. Mary, it was said, had not dared to start to breathe until Carolyn also had been born; (2) then there is the idea that the second twin will overtake the first one sooner or later; (3) there is their mutual trickery, and rivalry, but in spite of this they remain closely and permanently intertwined, and living and dying, killing and succouring remain forever life-issues between them. All this is recounted in the Biblical story of Esau and Jacob; it was a feature in the relationship between Mary and Carolyn.

The conflict between life and death, between the ambivalent feelings about the pleasures and the struggles involved in staying alive as against the fear, abhorrence but also attraction to "easeful death," these are indeed archetypal forces and themes in all of us. They are particularly marked and intense in twins.

This life and death conflict is also, I think, evinced in our desire for fusion, for de-fusion, and for re-fusion; for here lie the roots of those psychic mechanisms that draw us on the one hand toward uniqueness and separateness, and on the other toward being or becoming part of that which is beyond us.

However, the archetypal process that is quite particularly prominent in Carolyn's case, but which is rarely, if ever, recognized by analytical psychologists as being archetypal, is the presence of splitting. This tends to be thought of as either a defensive or a destructive mechanism, featuring importantly—perhaps even exclusively—in the Kleinian school. And yet this is what Hanna Segal writes about it in 1964:

One of the achievements of the paranoid-schizoid position is splitting. It is splitting which allows the ego to emerge out of chaos and to order its experiences. This ordering of experience which occurs with the process of splitting into a good and bad object, however excessive and extreme it may be to begin with, nevertheless orders the universe of the child's emotional and sensory impressions and is a precondition of later integration. It is the basis of what is later to become the faculty of discrimination, the origin of which is the early differentiation between good and bad (Segal 1964, p. 22).

This process was quite particularly evident in Carolyn. It is indeed a very essential and necessary process in twins if they are to develop and each to gain their own separate identity in spite of all the pressures and temptations to remain fused. In Carolyn we could of course see splitting in the early and more archaic form which, as described by Segal, makes it inevitably "excessive and extreme." There was thus an enactment, in the case of Carolyn, a living of an archetypal theme, the twinship theme.

Earlier in this and in a previous paper (Gordon 1985), I have suggested that there can be several ways of relating to what is archetypal. One of them is the enactment, the living of an archetypal *theme*. Another way is the identification with an archetypal *figure*. This tends to lead to ego inflation, which we can often observe in patients with a narcissistic character disorder. I have in fact described three such patients in my paper, "Narcissism and the Self: Who am I that I love?" (Gordon 1980).

Case History: Jane

I described there an impressive and glaring example of the patient I had called Jane. She idealized her father, who had died when she was five years old. Her relationship to her mother was decidedly ambivalent: She both admired her as someone who knows the world and is extremely capable at making for herself an important, enviable, and materially and aesthetically successful place in it, but she also accused her of being immature, selfish, self-centered, and unconcerned about her, her daughter. Soon after the father's death her mother had remarried—"an intellectual, successful, and rich" man.

Jane herself was attractive and dressed with taste. She was intelligent and a gifted painter; but her difficulty in personal relationships prevented her from having the sort of success her talents deserved.

When she first started analysis, she would explode with anger; she would rant and rave and pour scorn on colleagues, friends, and lovers. It was easy to recognize them as the carriers of the projection of her own shadow because she described them as ruthless, enraged, enraging, contemptible, and as generally inadequate. She was an accomplished actress and would enact and mime her encounter and struggles with her friends, lovers, and colleagues. At that time she felt compelled to try to entertain me.

When her projections entered into the transference, her rages burst into our relationship. She accused me of being unconcerned about her and above all of being unable to recognize her genius and how really special she was. Such vociferous outbursts and claims were often followed by a total collapse of confidence, when she would appear terribly fragile, helpless, empty, and dependent. But generally her behavior, her postures as well as the content of her apperceptions and fantasies, made it quite clear that Jane was identified much of the time with the archetypal personage of the great mother, both in her positive and negative forms; sometimes she was the goddess, sometimes the witch. There was thus much ego inflation with feelings of being omniscient, omnipotent, and

perfect. Only at moments when she felt helpless did I sense the presence of some ego capacity. For then I experienced her, in my own countertransference, as a small infant that despairs of ever being able to make others take note of its needs, or even of its presence. When I think back on those first few months, I think of them as filled with screams of frustration, of hatred, of resentment, and of terror.

Inevitably there was, as yet in those early months, very little experience of any boundary between us. She would tell me that really we two had the same talents, the same feelings, and really did the same sort of work. In one of her earliest dreams she and I were together somewhere in Europe during the late Middle Ages, two prostitutes in a brothel.

From the way Jane had talked about her mother I gained the impression that her mother had also identified with the archetypal figure of the great mother, and that she also tended to identify now with the witch and now with the goddess. Certainly Jane experienced her as seductive and endowed with magical powers, which only magnified both her envy and admiration of her mother. By feeling herself to be goddess or witch Jane in a way she tried to equal her mother and to compete with her. She was really taken aback and incredulous when she became aware that I was not at all impressed by the goddess, but much more concerned for the helpless infant. After all, nobody seems ever to have paid any attention to this baby, and so she herself had come to detest it, for here was the place of pain.

As Jane had invested the major part of her narcissistic libido in an archetypal figure with which she was identified—or, it would be more accurate to say, by which she was possessed—and as this identification seemed to have been reinforced by her experience of her actual mother, I have seen it as my first and major task to help her displace this narcissistic libido away from the archetypal mother and toward the much more rejected and much neglected baby-self.

The projection of an archetypal figure is often the root-cause of a particularly poisonous, intractable, and intransigent human relationship which one can encounter in, for instance, marital work. In analytic therapy it characterizes many a delusional transference, be this temporary or, in the case of borderline patients, relatively long-term state, which most of us have inevitably met and experienced. Many of us may at times have experienced the temptation to collude, by identifying with what has been projected into us, particularly if it happens to be flattering, as when we are cast into the role of the infinitely wise, or the infinitely understanding and compassionate, or the infinitely omniscient one; or we have experienced hurt or fear, or anger or despair if we find ourselves saddled with the projection of something or somebody bad or stupid or evil.

I remember a patient who was a sadomasochistic homosexual. In his fantasies he lived out the theme of Artemis to whom annually the youth adjudged to be the most beautiful and the most intelligent was sacrificed by being beaten to death. He would identify now with this perfect sacrificial youth, now with him, who carried out the immolation. In the transference I was at times the goddess determined in my demand that life be squeezed out of him; at other times I was experienced as more insidiously dangerous and destructive, when, for instance, I was seen as a fish hiding under a stone, shooting out a long tongue to catch its victims.

This patient had been the third illegitimate child, fathered by the same man, of a respectable upper-class woman. She had passed off her three children as having been adopted; this then earned her the reputation of being a generous and socially conscious person.

The patient had slept in his mother's bed until a very late age. He could not remember when and at what age he was "thrown out." But he remembered that he had experienced all sorts of anxieties and fantasies in this close contact with his mysterious mother. And he remembered that at times he would put on all available clothes before he went to bed at night—as if he needed many thick layers of protective clothing.

Here again an archetypal figure was, as it were, incarnated and so confirmed by the personal experience of an actual parent.

Case History

In the case of another patient I felt imprisoned in the role of the devouring, insatiable, and mocking giantess, the woman with such an enormous genital cavity that his own penis would be laughably ineffective. For many months I was held fast in that role, and so was he in his as the hopeless, impotent, the forever-criticized, spurned, and ridiculed youth—although he was in fact a man in his forties.

I have chosen to describe these few patients in order to show the different use we can make and the different functions that archetypal processes can assume in our experience, in our behavior, and in our relationships.

I have up to now spoken mainly of the archetypal processes as they may function in our patients. It is, however, important that we also look at the part they may play in the analyst's countertransference. They may be beneficial to our work as analysts; they may help us to empathize, sympathize, and feel with and for our patients by making us open and receptive to the many themes they bring us. We may have met some of these archetypal constellations ourselves, experienced them and done battle with

them in our personal life and personal analysis. But inevitably there must be areas in each of us which we have not yet sufficiently explored and worked through. If the patient's material, or events in our own life, stirs up these areas, these archetypal constellations, then they could distort our understanding and our perceptions—perceptions of ourselves, of our patients, or of the role required of us in relation to them. I am thinking here of, for instance, the temptation that is potentially present in our work, to identify with such archetypal personages as the great mother, the great father, the every-ready phallic male, the inquisitor, the wise old man, the wise old woman, the healer, the magician, and so on. Or we may be tempted to project on to our patients the archetypal child or the archetypal patient. Such archetypal identifications and projections are very likely to halt, arrest, or even reverse the analytic work.

On the other hand if access to archetypal experience is blocked or avoided—be it in the case of patient or analyst—the results may be stagnation, lack of growth and development, rigidity and inability to move or to adjust to new situations, or even to new dangers. This may happen if there is an anxious clinging to the rational, or the familiar, the known and, therefore, the apparently controllable. Such a defensive stand may indeed prevent further growth and development and twist life to become increasingly dull, flat, and banal.

The question that seems to me to be important and that I now want to ask is whether the concept of “an archetype” or an “archetypal process” is in fact valuable, carries some measure of validity, and is actually useful; and if it is useful, when and to whom is it useful?

As a matter of fact during the last few years interest has been shown in the possible similarities and connections between some of Jung's theories and the new theoretical formulations in the “hard” sciences like physics and biology. This really bears out Jung's prophetic belief that

Sooner or later, nuclear physics and the psychology of the unconscious will draw closer together as both of them, independently of one another and from opposite directions, push forward into transcendent territory. . . . Psyche cannot be totally different from matter for how otherwise could it move matter? . . . Psyche and matter exist in the same world, and each partakes of the other, otherwise any reciprocal action would be impossible. (Jung 1951)

Indeed Fritjof Capra and June Singer have drawn attention to these new developments. And Elie Humbert has been much involved in the conferences organized to facilitate the joint exploration of analytical psychologists and thinkers and researchers in the “hard” sciences. Capra, for instance, in *The Turning Point* writes of Jung:

In breaking with Freud he [Jung] abandoned the Newtonian models of psychoanalysis and developed a number of concepts that are quite consistent with those of modern physics and with systems theory. . . . The difference between Freud and Jung parallel those between classical and modern physics, between the mechanistic and the holistic paradigm (Capra 1982, pp. 396-97).

I, as well as some other colleagues, have been intrigued by the work of Rupert Sheldrake and David Bohm. Sheldrake, a British biologist, has produced a number of hypotheses to account for the fact that things and creatures attain, maintain, and pass on their physical and behavioral forms and how this might be understood. There is a "morphogenetic field," he suggests, which controls the overall development of an organism; through "motor-fields" are shaped the behavior patterns of creatures that are similar. And with the help of his concepts of "formative causation," the "resonance pattern," and "cognitive resonance" and by accumulating evidence from carefully controlled research, we will probably discover that creatures of a given species will learn more easily and more quickly tasks that have been learned by previous generations of the same species—although there has been no direct communication, demonstration, or teaching. He believes that if his theses were to be confirmed, then it would help to explain such phenomena as the collective unconscious and psychic transmission.

Louis Zinkin in England has drawn our attention to David Bohm in a paper given to The Society of Analytical Psychology in London fairly recently. He is interested in the relevance to analytical psychologists of Bohm's theory about the hologram, the holomovement, and his concept of the "implicate order." In the hologram the information of the whole is contained in a small part, in any and every small part, as we can now all see and enjoy, for instance, on our credit cards. Bohm emphasizes that the whole can no longer be thought of as consisting simply of parts in interaction; rather the whole organizes the parts and the whole is "enfolded" into the parts. Bohm argues further that "For thousands of years science has concentrated only on the explicate orders of the universe," but that "beneath each explicate order lies implicate order" (Zinkin 1987).

To explain the concept of explicate and implicate order Bohm has written:

What appears to be stable, tangible, visible, audible world is an illusion. It is dynamic and kaleidoscopic—not really "there." What we normally see is the explicit, or unfolded, order of things, rather like watching a movie. But there is an underlying order that is mother and father to this second generation re-

ality. He called the other order implicate, or enfolded. The enfolded order harbours our reality, much as the DNA in the nucleus of the cell harbours potential life and directs the nature of its unfolding. (Ferguson 1982)

And Briggs and Peat explain that

Bohm's implicate order neatly accounts for a universe that appears both continuous and discontinuous. It just depends on how the ensembles unfold. If they unfold one after the other very near each other, they look like a simple particle moving continuously from one place to another or even like a particle separating into several other particles and then re-emerging as itself again. . . . In Bohm's implicate universe both the observing apparatus and the observer himself are also unfolding ensembles. (Briggs & Peat 1984)

I have found Bohm's thought so particularly relevant to our understanding of the fact that the archetypal processes are often accompanied by a feeling of numinosity, which seems indeed to suggest that here is an experience of a wholeness that is greater than our consciousness can grasp and be aware of. I myself have already described a religio-mythical triad which helps to anchor and confirm further our conception of the structure of the psyche. To have more support and corroboration for some of our models and observations of psychic events from Bohm, a man working in a hard science, is indeed very satisfying.

But to return now to my question regarding the value, validity, and usefulness of the concept "archetype" and "archetypal," at least at our present stage of knowledge. I do believe that this concept is indeed useful and necessary to the theoretician. It is, after all, a cornerstone in the theoretical edifice of analytical psychology. Freud also seems to have come very near to formulating it and to incorporating it in his model of psychological functioning. It seems furthermore to be related to Piaget's "innate schemata" and to the concepts and discoveries that have emerged in the science of ethology.

We have in fact by now so much evidence that there exists in man innate and inherent ordering mechanisms; this makes it almost impossible to avoid arriving at some theoretical formulation of it, whatever name be chosen. In fact, the name seems to function more often as a sort of declaration of adherence to one school of thought or the other rather than as a valuable descriptive tool.

As regards its value to the practicing analyst: the fact that I have been able to describe here some of the signs that can alert me, the analyst, to the presence in the patient of a predominantly archetypal experience, must indicate that the concept provides a real and potentially very important clue. It will certainly make me watchful and aware that I need to be particularly attentive and mindful when something basic and powerful

has happened, or is happening, in the patient. A new and perhaps vital process may be preparing itself for him, in him, and/or between us. Thus here, too, the concept serves a useful and important function.

I am, however, hesitant and doubtful as regards its usefulness to the analysand. I find that in my actual work with a patient I hardly, if ever, refer to anything as being "archetypal." I am anxious lest it might distort or set aside the patient's own personal feelings and experience. I am also anxious that the very naming of it might inflate him and tempt him to idealize whatever is happening to him. Or there may be the opposite danger: it may make him feel possessed, in the grip of forces thought to be beyond him, which will make him feel less responsible and more helpless. For I do indeed believe, as Professor Allport said many years ago, that if a person believes himself to be free, then he can use what equipment he has more flexibly and successfully than he would if he were convinced that he dwells in chains. For such a sense of impotence, hopelessness, despair, and fatalism is surely after all the very condition from which we analysts want to liberate our patients.

Summary

In this paper I have tried to re-examine once more the concepts "archetype" and "archetypal experience." I have done so in the light of Fordham's thesis that there is at the beginning of the development of the psyche an original self which, through the process of deintegration, leads to the emergence of what he has called "the deintegrate." He has tended to assume that the concept "deintegrate" is more or less identical with the concept "archetype," that it is a conceptual construct which parallels the ethologist's innate release mechanism, and that it functions very much like the *scintillae* which Jung regarded as islets of potential consciousness and hence as ego nuclei.

However, the images and fantasies that we encounter in our patients—and in our own dreams and fantasies—are so much more rich and complex than the ethologists' innate release mechanism. To do justice to this discrepancy and to sharpen our theoretical tools and so increase our understanding, it may be necessary—and useful—to recognize a difference between the concept of deintegration and the concept of an archetypal process. I have suggested that the term "deintegrate" be reserved for those processes that issue directly from the process of deintegration. The archetype on the other hand is a hybrid, a hybrid between nature and nurture, between a deintegrate or a pattern of deintegrates on the one hand and the relevant objects met with on the other. This would

then also draw attention to the fact that although there are indeed reactions and themes that are universal, yet the actual form they take varies from person to person, from epoch to epoch, and from culture to culture.

I have described in this paper some cases in order to show the different relationships a person may have to the archetypal processes. These may take on the form of myths and themes or of personages. They may be projected, identified with, lived and acted out, or they may appear in sleep or in waking fantasies. The enacting in the real world of archetypal experience can be a danger not only for patients but for the analyst also.

As a final point in this paper, I have explored whether the concept "archetypal" is useful to (a) the theoretician; (b) the analyst-clinician; (c) the patient. More and more evidence has emerged to support the validity of such a concept. Only in the case of the patient do I have some apprehension lest it should prove to be counterproductive to the therapeutic process.

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